

THE
TWO SUFFERERS CONTRASTED;

OR,
FEAR AND ANGUISH
AND
JOY AND PEACE.

A RECORD OF FACTS,
From the Chamber of Sickness and Death.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"A MEMORIAL OF CHRISTIAN AFFECTION," "TOKEN OF LOVE
TO LITTLE CHILDREN," &c., &c.

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P R E F A C E.

WHEN the Sketch which forms the First Part of this little volume was put into the hands of the Publisher, there was no intention on the part of the writer to add the Second. An addition, however, by way of contrast, being thought desirable by the individual to whose care the publication was entrusted, that of "MATILDA" has been selected, with the belief that a more glorious and striking contrast, in every respect, could not be found. And although to some it may appear questionable to introduce a character who is still lingering amongst us, and therefore still subject to infirmity and encompassed with imperfection; yet, when they are told that the substance of what is now brought before them has been kindly permitted to appear in the "Englishwoman's and Christian Lady's Magazine," and that the poor sufferer has been for the last two years mainly supported by

the generous response given by the Christian public to those calls to usefulness; and that, moreover, the writer still contemplates the delightful privilege of ministering to this afflicted one through the new channel now opening before her; she trusts there is not one who will, *after* reading the account, cherish the objection.

Autobiography is not always desirable; yet there are circumstances under which it may appear to advantage, and be productive of extensive usefulness in more respects than one: and such, under the blessing of the Most High, who knows the needs of all his children, it may prove in the present instance.

Poor FRANK has been for a long time numbered with the silent dead, but *he* speaks in these pages in language unutterably emphatical. He speaks of the worth of Time—the danger of delay—the fear of Death—and the dread of Eternity! READER, LET HIM NOT SPEAK IN VAIN! LISTEN TO HIS EXPIRING GROANS, AND PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD!

RUGBY,

June 19th, 1848.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following narratives are strictly and literally true, and are intended both as a warning and encouragement to parents and youth. That of "FRANK" will be found to show in striking characters the folly and misery of those who, in youth and health, treat religion with contempt or indifference, and who imagine, in the pride and haughtiness of their hearts, that they can *die* as carelessly and securely as they have lived : the poet tells us,

"Men may *live* fools, but fools they cannot die !"

and certain it is, that those who have boasted most of their innate courage, have been the first to recoil under the pressure of the king of terrors ! If we turn to the death-beds of either of our confirmed infidels, we shall find anything but moral courage in the ascendant ; and if these champions and *princes* in unbelief failed to show us how to die triumphantly, or even *calmly*, can we expect to find that their hosts of puny imitators will meet the grim

look of death with hearts unmoved or countenances unblanched? No!—Death is too fearful an enemy to them to be approached *without* terror. “Ah, but to die! to enter on the untried—to take the fearful leap, not knowing whether *annihilation* or *condemnation* awaits me—Oh, this is misery!” exclaims many a dying one whose days and years of health were spent in boasted infidelity or culpable indifference.

FRANK was not an infidel, as that term is generally understood,—but he was *not a believer!* He had never discovered any beauty in the Saviour that he should desire, and therefore had never turned the penitent eye of faith towards this all-glorious Friend. The painful consequence of this neglected duty will be seen in the following pages; and the reader will, I trust, remember that it is no overwrought picture of a vivid and fertile imagination that is here brought before him, but sober truth, without one iota of exaggeration in the detail. Indeed it may truly be affirmed that one half has not been told; but enough, we hope, to show that the sinner, in his *own* strength, cannot courageously grapple with the enemy, death! nor retain his fancied security when heart and flesh are failing him! Poor Frank found

this true when it was too late. Oh that, the youthful reader may learn, from the experience of *another*, not to put off with trifling unconcern the intensely important subject of his soul's salvation !

The world, with its giddy pleasures and jostling concerns, became as nothing in Frank's esteem ; and why ?—because they failed to satisfy the cravings of his awakened spirit. When asked if any of his worldly companions should be invited to see him, his energetic reply was, “*Oh, no !* they cannot give me pleasure *now* ; they cannot make me feel happy as a dying man ; I have given them too much of my company already, and wasted too much of my precious time with them. I now find, to my cost, that I have been all wrong : I grasped shadows, and they have vanished ! My cheerfulness is gone ; my happiness (if it deserved the name) is also *gone* ; my energy gone, my health gone—all, all departed, and I left the miserable victim of vain pursuits and fancied pleasures ! To which of my worldly associates would you wish to expose me ? I wish to shun them *all !*” How unpalatable these remarks were to the worldly friend to whom they were addressed, I leave my readers to guess ; but I can assure them, poor Frank was not *solitary* in the expression of

such feelings : many a heart-broken sinner has, under similar circumstances, given utterance to the same sentiments, to the wounded pride and bitter grief of those who called them *friends*. To the child of God (should there fortunately be one near) such a manifest change excites a pleasing hope that the self-exiled prodigal is come to himself, and desiring the plenty and *society* of his FATHER'S house in place of the husks and company of the far country. And thus in truth it was with Frank. He saw his poverty, he *felt* his need : his soul longed for the water of life, and THAT BREAD which giveth life unto the world ; and he knew those who fostered his pride and self-importance could not aid him in seeking these spiritual blessings. He therefore wisely desired to be entirely separated from them ; which could not be, if from under my roof. Hence his earnest desire to travel the distance he did, on the Monday previous to his death ; and which, together with the intense agony of his mind, in all probability accelerated the dreaded event. It was not the expectation that the perishing body would be more tenderly cared for than with many other friends—for indeed this could not well be ; but the hope that the poor anguished spirit would be directed to some

ground of confidence, would be told of some balm against despair—some Physician of value, *able as well as willing* to speak the cure. His own grasping intellect was found powerless for such a purpose; nor could his retentive memory present anything to his mental vision that savoured of *comfort*. All within him, and all that was past, echoed back but one sound, and that sound was—DESPAIR, with all its gloomy horrors! Would that the mind could dwell on some tangible proof that Frank's LATE repentance was not too late, but that the eleventh hour was an hour of pardon and acceptance! I cannot think that even the dying thief who hung beside the crucified One experienced a more intense desire for the full benefit of the atonement: but although it was not given *us* to *know* that the same cheering sound had fallen upon his ear as greeted the malefactor during the last throes of mortal agony; yet the word of God warrants us to believe that genuine repentance and conviction of sin is the *Spirit's* work, and as such regarded by Him who in ancient times said, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself."*

"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy

* Jer. xxxi. 18.

sins.”* The broken and contrite spirit are his delight; and here, as far as Frank is concerned, I have endeavoured to take refuge from those anxious fears which, in the absence of *assured* hope, too frequently assault and weigh down the spirits. And surely I may exercise this blessed privilege of *hope* for the departed without fear of fostering a *presumptuous* spirit in those of my readers who have as yet neglected to close with the offers of redeeming love! Surely, surely no sane individual would deliberately expose himself to the mental agony Frank endured, because it is just *possible* the Lord may be entreated of at the last moment to accept the dregs of a life systematically opposed to his word and will. If such there can be, we owe ourselves at a loss for motives to urge them to a wiser course. But I would far rather hope that the contrast in the second sufferer will lead each and all who may open these pages to say, “Lord, let *me* be found ready, with my lamp trimmed and my light burning, so that death may not surprise or alarm me ;

“ ‘ Death cannot make our souls afraid,
If God be with us there ! ’ ”

This MATILDA has long since believed, so that

* Isa. xliii. 25.

death to her will be unspeakable gain! Often is she ready to exclaim, "How long, O Lord, how long?" She is sighing for home, and finds herself obliged frequently to check her impatience.

Wonderful is the difference between the two characters. And what has caused it? All the advantages of superior intellect and worldly acquirements will be found on the side of Frank; but do we envy him the possession of these when we place them by the side of that childlike spirit, that *waiting* frame, that living, active principle of faith, that ardent love so richly experienced by Matilda? Assuredly not. And herein consists the difference between them;—the one walks by faith, the other lived by sight and sense. And this is the only real difference between the whole human family; riches, titles, intellect, station, influence, honours, however much they may be esteemed and courted by us, form no *real* distinction in the estimation of Him from whose creative hand man first sprang into being, and who, in the omnipotence of his power, crushes the most powerful monarch with as much ease as the infant who enters the world but to weep and to die!

It were well if these facts were more weighed by

mankind at large, then we should see less of that feverish thirst for the wealth and dignities of this world, and more for those enduring glories of that world where God himself shall stand revealed as the satisfying portion of every raptured soul! Christian parents, "do you covet this blessed *portion* for your children?—then allure them from the pursuit of *fancied* pleasures by a holy consistency of walk and conversation. Let them *see* that *earth* does not engross all your time, nor the perishing creature all your affections.

"He builds too low, who builds beneath the skies," for his childrens' happiness; and whenever forgetful of their high responsibility, parents are careful only to secure for their children earth-born and earth-bound pleasures, they commit an error, the extent of which can only be fully realised when the veil of mortality drops from their eyes, and they find themselves without a covering before the just Judge who cannot be deceived by appearances, nor appealed from in judgment.

Would that the perusal of the following pages might lead those entrusted with the solemn duty of training the youthful mind to the important inquiry,

—Have I done, or am I doing, my duty to the *souls* as well as to the bodies of those over whom I am placed? Is there anything left undone in the way of correction, exhortation, or reproof, that God would have me do? Do I bear about with me the weighty consideration that my children are *immortal*, though dying creatures,—and that death may come as an unannounced messenger, at any hour of the day, or any watch of the night?

Christian friends, these are not *trifling* questions. Can we answer them satisfactorily? Surely if Death is uncertain in his approach, ~~we~~ should be “fixed as sentinels, all eye, all ear,” so as not to suffer those under our command and protection to be surprised by the coming foe. Many an unhappy deathbed might be avoided, and many a happy and peaceful one secured, if parents did their duty. And, oh! how terrible is the thought that we should fail in our duty towards those so intensely dear unto us! Strange and criminal infatuation! Parents, awake and examine yourselves and your capabilities. True, none of us can work a *spiritual* change on our children: nor can I persuade myself that any sober Christian imagines that any outward form, however

valuable in itself, can effect this mighty transformation. No!—*this* is the work of the Spirit, and the Spirit only; but if we cannot change the *hearts* of our children, we can do *much* towards effecting a *moral* change. We may cultivate the affections, and *direct* them to the CHILDRENS' FRIEND; we may train them to an artless simplicity and guilelessness of character; we may soften their manners, and impart, by ever-watchful care, high integrity of purpose; we may educate the conscience, and make them *fear a lie*; we may make them understand and appreciate the pleasure of well-doing, and the unhappiness of evil-doing; we may train them to kindness and generosity towards their fellow-creatures, and to uniform unselfishness of conduct: and if we thus do *our* duty, we may rest assured God will not fail in *his*. But to discharge such onerous duties aright, we need a strength and a wisdom far beyond our own. We also greatly need the spirit of patient, persevering prayer,—though the Christian parent must not depend on prayer, he must *work* as well as pray; or he will resemble a husbandman who daily waters a field into which he has cast *no* grain! And this we really fear is the case with

many, hence the frequent failures in domestic training ; they pray, and doubtless pray earnestly,—but this is NOT enough ; they should not rest here, or they will rest after making only the *preparation* for labour,—rest at the threshold of duty. And how sad is this for the moral characters of their children ! If in after life they should be placed among *God's* children, how probable it is that they will often be found wanting in that holy consistency of character which renders the religion of Jesus attractive to the bystanders, and productive of glory to its great Founder. This is not the age of miracles ; and if we sow the wind, we must expect to reap the whirlwind. If we indulge our children, and they do wrong, (as most decidedly they will, either openly or secretly), and we content ourselves with Eli's expostulation, “Nay, my sons, but it is no good report I hear of you,” we may thank ourselves that our *prayers* are not answered.

Oh that those *parents* who read the dying words of Frank as to the fearful consequence of his early training, may lay these things to heart, and vigorously use the means a God of love has committed to them, and train their children, both by precept

and example, for a blissful immortality ; so that when the days of darkness overtake them, and the pains of a decaying body oppress them, they may, like Matilda, sit watching for their Father's voice of love to call them from all the ills of Time to all the surpassing joys of Eternity !

RUGBY,

July, 1848.

THE TWO SUFFERERS.

Fear and Anguish.



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ST. PAUL, in his own full and forcible words, declares, that the doctrine of a crucified Saviour was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness; while to the humble and penitent believer, it was "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." It is precisely the same in our own day: the heart of man in its unrenewed state, hates the humiliating doctrine of free, unmerited grace. The natural man rebels, at the bare mention of his entire depravity, and would gladly evade the evidence, as well as deny the fatal consequence of the fall. Tell him that however amiable, however moral, however just, or however *generous* he may be towards his fellow-man; yet that without a principle of faith in, and love to Jesus—without a belief in and dependence on the aid and influence of the Holy Spirit, he is

absolutely*at variance with his Maker, and he will at once denounce you a visionary enthusiast, or a narrow-minded bigot. Sins against society are the only sins he can or will recognise ; and to these alone will he attach criminality. In all he does he consults his own will, and his own unenlightened understanding. Self-love, self-esteem, and desire for human praise, with a host of ambitious schemes and projects, are with him the *all*-absorbing incentives to action. Represent to him the all-perfect and comprehensive law of God ; endeavour to bring home to his conscience its demands to love God' with *all* the *heart*, and *soul*, and *strength*, and he will quarrel at its strictness, and resent the curse denounced against disobedience. So truly and painfully evident is it that the carnal mind is enmity to its Maker—that it is *not* subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, *can be*. An *enemy*, however hostile bitter and implacable, may be propitiated, and eventually reconciled ; but, the *principle* of ENMITY itself is, we all know, directly at variance with reconciliation. Alas ! that so many thousands in this our professedly Christian country should be found in this state of enmity towards God—lifting up the puny arm of rebellion against the majesty of heaven and the sovereign Ruler of earth ; rejecting

his proffered salvation—treating with proud contempt the *only* way of return to his favour and friendship, and affecting an independence of *being* and *action*, which, *if* persisted in, must sooner or later prove their irreparable ruin! It is from our hearts we exclaim of such—“Oh! that they were *wise*, that they understood *this*, that they would *consider* their *latter end*!” But alas! they hate instruction, and will not receive reproof. How fearful their doom! Let us listen to it, as given by the pen of inspiration:—“Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will *laugh* at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. *Then* shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they *hated* knowledge, and would not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised *all* my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.”* Surely a more fearful picture of man’s mad rebellion, and

* Prov. i. 24—31.

God's just indignation and vengeance, could not be drawn than in this passage of holy writ; and yet in spite of this and many other terrible warnings sounding in their ears, men go heedlessly onward, regardless alike of caution and threatening, rushing on the thick bosses of His buckler* who in righteousness doth judge, and make war.† The source of all this blindness and infatuation—this *enmity* to the God that made them, is given by the Psalmist—"The wicked through the *pride* of their heart will not seek after God." Yes, PRIDE lies at the bottom of all this alienation—this *enmity*; and as the whole Bible is levelled at this pride in the natural man, he hates the Bible, and regards it as Ahab regarded the fearless and faithful prophet of Israel. "Hast thou found me, O mine ENEMY!" exclaimed that weak and wicked monarch; and so in heart says every unconverted man when the truths of God's word meet his eye, or reach his ear. They are his enemies because they present a standard of moral rectitude to which he has *no* desire to attain, and they denounce threatenings against disobedience, which in spite of all his vaunted disbelief, something whispers *may* be really executed! Thus he has a continual struggle against God's word. But, oh! how vain is such a conflict!

* Job xv. 26.

- † Rev. xix. 11.

How worse than useless such rebellion, since one blast of the Almighty can unnerve the strongest arm—one withering disappointment crush the loftiest ambition,—one bereaving providence frustrate the fairest projects,—and one touch of disease turn the brightest and most grasping intellect to folly!

The truth of the foregoing remarks was perhaps never more strikingly exemplified than in the character of Frank R—. Proud of intellect, “of wisdom vain!” His excursive and tenacious mind raised him far above the generality of his associates. From a child, superior natural talent was as visible in his recreations as in his studies; so that whether you saw him with his rod and line, or his dog and gun; diving into the mysteries of alchemy, or poring over a mathematical problem; you could trace the workings of a superior mind, which, if health and opportunity were given, would one day revel in the wide field of intellectual delights. Would that the training of such a character had devolved on others than those he owned as parents. He might not only have been living, delighting society with his rich and cultivated mind, but have ranked among those real Christian philanthropists of the day, who are nobly endeavouring to carry forward the moral and religious improvement of their

country. But alas, dear readers, this promising youth, was trained by parents at open enmity with God, and from whom he too early learned to ridicule everything sacred and Divine.

Vigorous in health, with a full tide of animal spirits, greatly admired for his boyish talent, but unhappily without the least mental culture, he, as a matter of course, grew up arrogant and self-conceited. And need we wonder? Man, at his best estate, girt around with the most favourable appliances to virtue, trained with the most sedulous care, is vain and inconstant, liable to a thousand delusions; and, indeed, not unfrequently displays a wide deviation from moral rectitude and sound principle, to be accounted for only on the score of that original depravity which the most consistent and watchful training fails wholly to eradicate.

Every *judicious* Christian parent *knows* that well-directed efforts may do something towards counter-acting in their children the moral maladies which as *heirs of the fall* are entailed upon them; but what education, be it ever so perfect, can new-create their souls, and assimilate them to the image of God? Yet until *this* great work be effected, we have no certainty that their future lives will be marked by

the practice of unselfish virtue, and the dedication of their various powers to the wellbeing of society and the glory of God. Need we then wonder that those upon whom no moral culture is bestowed, should grow up imperious and proud, domineering and selfish, impatient of restraint, and reckless of consequences? If there be one truth more legibly stamped than another as the effects of the fall, it is this—the strict resemblance of the youthful mind to the curse-stricken earth, which, for the sin and punishment of man, was doomed to bring forth *nothing spontaneously but thorns and thistles*.* And where is the mind, erect in its own native purity, and endowed with innate wisdom, that can stand forth as a visible refutation of this axiom? The philosophers of reason, tottering on their giddy eminence, may *boast* of the God-like nature and capabilities of man; but for persons in their senses to believe such declamations, they *must* not cast their eyes on earth, nor lend their ears to the tales of earth. Everything around us, about us, and within us, speak but in *one* strain, which is to echo back the lamentation of more than two thousand years: “How is the gold become dim! how is the

* Gen. iii. 17, 18.

most fine gold changed!" * or, without figure, to take up the testimony of still more ancient times,—
"Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only *evil* continually." † Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded by the united testimony of six thousand years, and every parent should begin his work as the husbandman would a piece of waste land. Not that at the present time we see any danger of the *intellect* remaining uncultivated,—for, as a nation, we have not now to learn that knowledge is power; the fear is for the HEART. The brain is not the *noblest* part of man, but too often do we find that the head is cultivated at the expense of a *totally neglected heart*. Oh that parents would consider that every such inversion of the Creator's laws tends to shame, disappointment, and misery! For when by excess of cultivation we enlarge the mental powers, at the same time *neglecting* the higher and nobler qualities of the heart, we are only affording our children a wider range and more diversified opportunities of showing their alienation from, and natural aversion to, the holy law of God.

It was this fearful absence of *moral* training to

* Lam. iv. 1.

† Gen. vi. 5.

which Frank was exposed from his very infancy : every circumstance of his early life tended to give him a distaste *for*, if not a hatred *to*, religion. No prayer of faith ascended for him from a fond mother's heart. No father's instructions told of Jesus' love, and pointed to the good and the right way. No domestic worship reminded him of his daily obligations to his Maker. As to everything spiritual, a darkness that might be *felt* brooded over his paternal home. How, with a heart stricken with anguish, did he, during his last days on earth, deprecate and reproach his *early training* ! Oh ye prayerless, and unbelieving parents ! could you have seen the bitter tears which he shed when death had visibly set his mark upon him ; and could you know how many times he was ready to *curse* the day of his birth, how would you arouse yourselves ! how would you plead for grace and strength to train your children for the next world, as well as for this ! how would you lament your cruelty in teaching them, either directly or indirectly, to set at naught the counsels of the Most High, to despise his overtures of mercy, and to treat with a contemptuous sneer acceptance with a redeeming God ! Most truly may it be said to all who thus act : " Ye know

not what ye do!" You know not the addition you make to your own future misery by the bitter taunts and reproaches of *lost* children, who, had you done *your duty*, might be swelling the triumph of the *SAVED*, instead of increasing the torments of the *LOST*! "Oh, awful consideration! Would that we knew *no* parents that excited our fears when looking forward to the solemn future; but, alas! alas! the utmost limits of Christian charity will not allow us to shut our eyes to *FACTS*. We are *compelled* to *fear*; and dare we, then, withhold the *expression* of our fears? No—whether our voice be heeded or not, we must say that we fear many, *very* many, parents are no more concerned for the *SOULS* of their children than for the beasts that perish! And yet they read of that "worm that *dieth not*, and of that fire that can *never be quenched*! Whence all this awful indifference and delusion? Is it not because God's word, though read, is not *believed*? Could they really show such gross insensibility did they *BELIEVE* that "the soul that sinneth, *it shall die*?" Surely not!

But absence of moral training was not the only evil—though doubtless the *greatest*—to which poor Frank was exposed.

During the first fourteen years of his life many promises had been given, and large expectations fostered both with regard to his education and future prospects; and to a mind thirsting for knowledge, and aspiring to literary distinction, it was no slight mortification to find that severe family losses, and a strange selfishness over what remained, would completely crush his fond and proud expectations. But so it was; he never enjoyed those extensive literary advantages to which he had been taught to look forward, but was obliged at the age of sixteen or seventeen, to care for himself. At least he began clearly to see that if he did not exert himself he would only drag on a worse than idle life under the paternal roof.

It can readily be imagined that he was not the kind of mind to brook *dependence*. He, therefore, under the exciting influence of disappointed hopes, eagerly seized the first opportunity that offered to render himself *independent*, without stopping to inquire how far the employment was suited to his health, his previous habits and expectations, or his future advancement. The difficulties he had to encounter were many; and the privations to which he was subject as vexatious as they were varied. Still he was too proud to complain, and too honourable to shrink from

the duties imposed upon him. But it was undoubtedly at this period of his life, that the seeds of premature decay were effectually sown; while the disagreeable circumstances necessarily connected with the situation were pent within his own breast, and there allowed to rankle and spread their baneful influence unchecked, begetting an irritability of temper and sourness of disposition which are too often found in connection with crushing disappointment and a total ignorance of the supports of God's blessed word, which in his case a measure of subsequent prosperity did not wholly efface.

During our youth, Frank and myself had at times been thrown a good deal together, and although many things were said and done to destroy my influence over him, by those who did not "*wish* to see him become a saint," yet I knew there was a deep brotherly affection in his heart towards me, which but for the blighting influence of this *moral mildew*, would have checked many a wayward propensity, and have secured to himself more sympathy and happiness. As it was, I resolved, if I could help it, never entirely to lose sight of him; accordingly, when in the course of God's providence, we were for some years widely separated, our intercourse was continued by writing. Many a letter

full of sparkling talent found its way to me while I was in eastern climes, but, alas, not a word to give me the most distant hope that "a change had come o'er the spirit of his dream." No! literature, politics, mercantile speculations, anything and everything was laid under contribution by his ready pen to amuse, except the "one thing needful,"—though this, he full well knew, had been with me from childhood the *all*-important concern. Among all his connexions, there was not one beside who *professed* to live for anything beyond the present life; a fact which, of course, caused a *deep* feeling of responsibility, and oftentimes caused youth to wear the soberness of age. Who does not feel sober and responsible when placed a solitary witness for the truth among a large circle of the ungodly, especially if young and inexperienced? Ah! none know the intensity of the feeling but those who have stood Elijah-like *alone*!—One day perhaps encountering ridicule, the next contending with opposition, and not unfrequently the sins and follies of the whole religion-professing community laid at your door. Did but professors know what hard rubs many a youthful disciple has to bear in secret, through their inconsistencies, they would either lay aside the profession, or act more in character with it.

Under happier circumstances, the influence I possessed over Frank might have been sufficient, as I before hinted, to have arrested his serious attention, and to have fixed it upon the concerns of eternity ; but, as the case stood, even when I knew he was feeling deeply what had been said, he would but too commonly reply in the words of those who *ought* to have taught him better, “Oh, you were born a saint, and cannot help yourself ; I do not wish to be one.” If the shortness of life, and the certainty of death were urged upon him, he would turn it off with a joke saying, “Leave me alone, I shall do well enough, depend upon it ; I shall want none of your praying ones around me when I am dying.” But, ah, my readers, it was only the praying one, whose religion he had been encouraged to ridicule, that he wished to have near him in that awful hour ; and never shall I forget its extreme awfulness !

It was the fate of dear Frank to pursue everything with avidity, so that when once he conceived the idea that any project or study would be likely to forward his worldly prospects, he set about it with an unremitting energy, which injured his health, and not unfrequently brought on a fit of illness ; but none of these warnings humbled him, or led him to

seek after spiritual health and life ; so true it is, that while even affliction is among the “ all things ” that work together for *good* to them that love God, yet to them that *do not* love him, but judge according to sense and feeling, these very chastenings produce impatience, fretfulness, discontent, and rebellion !

Frank found, as many others have found, that the study of mathematics was too engrossing for his health, and consequently was frequently and earnestly advised by his medical friends to give it up ; but, no ! he knew his greatest chance of success depended on the extent of his mathematical knowledge, and therefore secretly, and alas ! too firmly, resolved at all hazards to pursue the study. Oh ! what intense efforts men make to advance their *worldly* interest, while the interest of the never-dying soul is totally disregarded. What folly and madness to be at such labour and toil, such fretting anxiety, and corroding care, for the honours and advantages of *time*, and yet take no thought, be at no pains to secure that incorruptible inheritance and unfading crown which God ; in the plenitude of his grace and love, hath promised to those who obey and serve him ! How is man fallen from that high original in which he was created ! How hath he followed vanity and become vain—

rejecting the most tender appeals from an ever-merciful and *long-suffering* God! Had Frank ever humbly inquired, "Where is God, my maker, and wherewith shall I come before Him?" Had he ever seriously considered that earth was not to be his resting-place; had he sought to know the will of Him who made him, how differently would he have acted, and how different might have been his end! But, no! through the natural pride of his heart, he shut his eyes to all, but the concerns of time! He trifled with the day of grace, and eternity must reveal the issue! O that it might be seen in that great day that his dying anguish of spirit, and his intense desire for salvation, were regarded by Him who delighteth to show mercy.

None felt more confident than Frank when in health, that death would be met *without fear*; none felt more determined to brave danger and stifle conviction should any arise, but as, dear readers, this could not be, the terrors of the Almighty made him afraid. He felt that he had nothing to fall back upon, and nothing to look forward to, that was capable of allaying the tumult of his agonized mind.

His health about this time began visibly to decline. I have just been favoured with a letter to a dear

Christian friend of mine to whom I had 'introduced him, written on his return from Devonshire, whither he had been advised to go for change ; which, as it unfolds some of the workings of his mind when his strength began to decline, I transcribe a portion of it :—

“I arrived in Town on Saturday evening, having made the journey from Torquay in a steam-vessel, and slept two nights at sea. . . . Many thanks for your kind birthday present, and still kinder letter—many thanks for your good wishes and prayers for my happiness during the year upon which I have just entered.* I thank you sincerely for your kind feelings towards me ; and although I have known you but for so short a time, I feel that you are no stranger to me, and that I know you and can confide in you as thoroughly as if I had known you for the last twenty years.

I will admit to you that I have passed the last milestone in my life's journey with considerable feelings of melancholy : I have rested at it, as it were, to look ~~and~~ see how the old sexton, Time, is working on, throwing up the earth, and digging the grave † wherein I must

* His last year.

† His 29th birthday.

at length lay all my sins and my sorrows. These feelings pressed upon me during my stay in Devonshire. I have felt the strong contrast between the guest of a country and the feverish and unnatural excitement of a town life. The season of the year, too, with the leaves falling around me, and nature sinking into decay, produced a pleasing melancholy, so gentle in its approach, and so prophetic in its influence, that the heart involuntarily bowed to it, and became softened and subdued. From this retirement, and with these feelings, I looked upon the turmoil of life as a shadowy scene, where, verily, I had been "disquieting myself in vain." Nature here was my monitor, and from her I could receive instruction, not like the harsh language of human wisdom, which insults while it instructs, but speaking of decay in a general gentle and unrepublishing voice, under the influence of which the heart feels better, and the cares, animosities and hatred which society may have engendered sink unperceived from our bosom, and we return to our houses, and to the society of our fellow-creatures, with the desire only to enlighten and to bless them. I dread the city. I know these feelings cannot live there; but I must return to it with my heart panting for the green fields like a newly-caged bird.

There is nothing more in this letter than the *theology of nature*, still it shows the heart to be in a measure softened and unsatisfied with the objects of its feverish pursuits, which, if it may not be considered the *first* step of the prodigal towards his father's house, is certainly the commencement of his return to his *right mind*.* We do not find the exile in the parable reasoning on the state and plenty of his forsaken home until "*he came to himself*;" nor did he come to himself until HE BEGAN TO BE IN WANT. When he found that the *husks could not* satisfy him, and that no man in the "*far country gave unto him*," he was led, as a natural consequence, to contrast his poverty and meanness with the sufficiency and happiness of that home he had so ungratefully and unnaturally forsaken—an exact similitude of human nature in general, and poor Frank in particular. Truly did *he* begin to feel himself "*in want*." An aching void had for years secretly extorted from him the cry, "Who will show me any good? Who, or *what* shall I seek for happiness? Where shall I betake myself to satisfy this craving after the Undefined?" but, alas! he turned not the eye of faith upward with the devout aspiration of the psalmist,

* Luke xv. 17.

“ Lord, lift *thou* up the light of thy countenance upon me,” (Psa. iv. 6,) and so went on in the way of his own froward and unbelieving heart. A sorrowful way indeed it was ; for he was not enough of a sceptic to stop the voice of conscience altogether, though enough of one to treat as an amusing *allegory* the account of the fall and its fatal consequences. The friend to whom he addressed the letter given above, once tried to extort a promise from him to read a portion of the word of God daily, looking for the promised Spirit to make him understand it. His reply was, “ No, I cannot promise you, for until I can receive the first few chapters as something beyond an allegory, beautiful in the extreme, I cannot go on.” Truly does this friend add, “ Poor fellow ! he was longing to find peace, but his pride of intellect led him to refuse to receive either the fall or the gospel as a little child. I feel sure that for some time previous to his death he felt the truth of the fall in his own heart, for he felt himself a sinner, although he would not confess it even to you. My heart weeps now at the thought of his sorrows ; for truly a sorrowful spirit shone forth in all the private conversations I had with him. One circumstance I must name to you, for it left a lasting, and, I trust, salutary impression on my mind ; for his

observation went deeply home to my heart, and you may draw from it a lesson for Christians. I was returning with him from Trinity Church, where Mr. Bridges had preached on the happiness and glories of heaven: "Well," he said, "if this is your hope and the hopes of Christians, I wonder that you are so often sad and down cast at the cares and troubles of life. If I could believe these things, and attain to such a hope for the future, it would cheer me and make me rejoice at all times." This home remark laid deep hold on my heart. I was convinced I had been hindering my Master's cause by my sad and murmuring spirit under those trials which then pressed on me. His words brought forcibly to my mind the command, "Rejoice in the Lord always." And I again thought joy is a fruit of the Spirit; for this I commenced praying; and though God kept me long waiting, he has answered my prayers; and though, alas, I fear I still often dishonour him by murmuring at present trial, instead of keeping my eye on the future, I can thank God for bringing this sin to remembrance by the mouth of dear Frank R——"

The letter I have made this quotation from only reached me yesterday, when I had written nearly all the foregoing pages. It has led me to think

much on God's dealings with his children. That the words of a *sceptic*—for such poor Frank then was—should have had more effect on the mind of a *Christian* than the powerful sermon that had just been listened to, seems wonderful; but so it was, and all we can say is, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” It is to be feared that Christians too often put into the mouths of the ungodly and profane the taunting expression, “Where is *now* their God?” where are now their boasted hopes of the future? Look at their sad and fallen countenances; listen to their impatient murmurings and faithless forebodings. Their religion does very well for the sunshine of prosperity, but in adversity they are “*weak as other men*.” Yes, dear Christians, we ought, at once and for *ever*, to disarm Satan's votaries of these powerful and *disgraceful* weapons,—for truly is it disgraceful to our profession, and dishonourable to our dearest Lord, for his enemies to suppose that the religion ~~has~~ ^{came} from heaven to establish should only be of use when fortune and the world smile. Whereas, in real truth, its *full beauty* and value are *not* known till “the cloudy and dark day” hides from us earthly enjoyments. But to return to Frank.

Soon after he was prevailed upon to accompany my friend to hear Mr. Bridges; his health, which had improved from his visit into Devonshire, began again to decline. For some time before he himself felt there was anything to apprehend, the fears of his friends were seriously excited, and he was again induced to seek change of air and scene. Unhappily he did not seek the warm and sheltered county of Devon, but went, at the suggestion of an unmedical friend, to an exposed coast in Sussex. The strong east wind, which at that time prevailed, was almost death to him. It was some days before I heard where he was, when a letter arrived, dated from B—. I fancied that I saw in the few tremulous lines it contained a change of style: the natural pride of his heart seemed to be giving way; and earnestly desiring to seize upon so favourable a moment, I instantly replied, affectionately sympathizing with him in his affliction, and endeavouring to convince him how both the love and wisdom of God are manifested in those trials which lay us low; and, in conclusion, I reminded him that on leaving England I had given him a little pocket Testament,—if he had it with him, I thought he might possibly derive some comfort from the perusal

of the twelfth chapter of the Hebrews, &c. The reply to this note proved that it had been well-timed. He said, "The spirit of your letter, just received, fell on my soul like dew upon the parched ground," &c. Of course such a confession called for deep gratitude and more direct effort. Yet the character to be dealt with required much both of *caution* and *tenderness*, as one imprudent or hasty word, or ill-timed observation, might have shut up from me for ever the avenues to his heart. How necessary for such blind and erring creatures as we are is the prayer, "*Give me good judgment and knowledge!*"

We are now approaching the rapidly closing scene, and truly solemn are the events to be related; and though some years have now winged their course since they occurred, methinks poor Frank's image—his anguished look—his intense desire—his *child-like* spirit—his thrilling words—his last "*God bless you*"—and his dying sigh—are ~~each~~ and all as vividly present to my mind as though I had only yesterday passed through the agonising scene.

The letter to which I sent so speedy a reply was followed by a second and a third, each breathing the

same humbled and chastened spirit ; and then came *the last*, despatched on the Saturday, telling me he was no better for the change, and that, if able, he should return to town on the following Monday, adding in a P.S., “I feel the beam swing doubtfully ; *a few days may determine whether for life or death.*”

Scarcely had I recovered from the shock these few lines caused me when a post-chaise brought him to the door. Not expecting him at our residence, it was some time before I could quiet my trembling frame to meet him with composure ; and when I had subdued my feelings, and entered the room,—oh, what a death-like object met my anxious gaze ! He was busy giving directions to his servant, who had accompanied him, to go at once for his favourite medical friend, who had attended him with much kindness for several years, so that I was spared the pain of speaking, and at the same time had full opportunity to observe his greatly altered features. *Death* seemed visibly stamped on each ; while ever and anon, as he turned his eye towards me, the silent tear rushed to it, telling me more forcibly than words could have told, that the long-cherished pride of his heart had given way, and that

he was prepared to listen to the glad tidings of salvation.

Neither of us ventured to exchange a word until the servant had left the room. I then approached the couch, and kneeling beside him, took his hand and said, "Dear F—, you appear very ill." He bent his head upon my shoulder, and for some moments replied only with tears. My heart was full almost to bursting. I forgot all his former ridicule, and could only think of his kindness to me and my fatherless children since my return to England. As well as my agitated feelings would allow me, I spoke to him of the *love* of God, the tenderness and pity of him who came to save, his willingness to pardon, his readiness to bless.

When able to articulate, he said, "My dear, I am come to you to settle my affairs for both worlds. You are able to teach me, and you must teach me. Begin at the beginning, and have patience with me as with a little child who has not learnt his A, B, C. Oh! that I had learnt of you years ago! Are you willing to teach me now? Can you have patience with me as you do with your own dear children?"

These sentences, my readers, are written without difficulty; but oh, they were not spoken without

much and painful effort both of body and mind ; the briny tears, mingling with the large drops which by the agony of his mind, were forced from every pore of his pallid and care-worn face.

I need not repeat now how I met these appeals of a dying man, further than to say that to much that passed I could give no answer but by looks, especially as to my ability to teach him. However, I gladly embraced the opportunity to disclaim any innate merit of my own, assuring him that I had nothing by nature more than himself, and that apart from Jesus I also was a lost and ruined sinner even as others ; and that the same fountain was open to him whence I had drawn all my supplies. I felt it necessary to make this clear statement first, because I knew he had often attributed that to nature and fate which sovereign grace only could effect, and even since we had both shared largely in the cares and trials of life. He had repeated many times his boyish expression, " Ah, well, you know you were born a saint, and could not help yourself ;" thus robbing God of his glory, and doing away with man's responsibility. He knew to what my remarks referred, and gazed on me with the deepest interest ; and, pressing my hand as if to urge me to proceed, I took from

the table, as I still knelt before him, the word of God, and began from that word to show him the cause of his past neglect of those things he now so ardently—so very ardently—desired to inquire into. Turning at once to the 1 Cor. i., I read the passage quoted at the commencement of this sketch,—“ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.” “ And why, dear Frank, was the cross of Christ foolishness to the Greeks? Simply because of their intellectual pride, which kept them aloof from its humiliating doctrines! They could not subscribe to the entire degeneracy of their natures, nor would they accept a salvation so entirely gratuitous—a salvation none can claim on the score of merit, or superior mental endowments. And has it not been thus with you? Possessing a large share of natural talent, with an intimate acquaintance with this world’s wisdom, have you not, in your heart, despised the religion of Jesus, judging it only fit for those who had not spirit or ability for carrying on the justling, engrossing concerns of this life?” These remarks were assented to most feelingly; for, alas! we both now felt that this had been the rock on which he had split. He had deemed that mean and contemptible which is the

only true wisdom, and treated man's highest glory too worthless for his notice. But, oh! what joy did it bring to my heart to know this state of things, awful as it was, and long as it had been persisted in, presented no barrier to his acceptance with the high and holy One, if he could only be induced to look simply to that Redeemer who is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins to all who call upon his name. Blessed, blessed gospel, thus to show how enemies can be made friends,—yea, more, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. My readers may well imagine with what grateful emotions I pointed this stricken one to Gethsemane and Calvary, dwelling where Jesus by one offering made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and therefore for his. Oh, what an hour of deep interest was that! Even now, though years have passed away, I seem, while writing in the stillness of the night, to be passing through it again, and feel breathless with excited feelings!—feelings which full surely NONE can know who have not been placed in similar circumstances; my own health, at the time, in a most precarious state, which, combined with the painful consciousness of my spiritual igno-

rance, and inability to meet successfully the difficulties of my position while a dying sinner was full before me, who, purposely avoiding all others, was hanging on my lips for instruction; every glance of whose eye seemed to say, "Tell me, must I PERISH?" The fear of saying too much for his half-awakened mind, and at the same time the dread of leaving unsaid anything God would have me say, produced such a rush of indescribable emotion that my mind seemed completely overpowered; and, but for the supporting arm of an unseen Saviour, I must have sunk under the contending feelings. Often do I see him looking upon me with that anxious indescribable gaze which seemed to say, "Speak, oh speak, and tell me can there be mercy for me? Oh! do not say I am condemned FOR EVER!"

Most gladly would I have evaded so deeply responsible an office; and perhaps my readers may ask, "Why did you not call in a more skilful and experienced teacher; one whose professed employment is to visit the *sick* and administer consolation to the *dying*, as well as to preach the gospel?" Not because I did not entirely feel my own insufficiency, as I have before stated, but because I knew the indi-

vidual with whom I had to deal would not open his mind to a stranger, however capable that stranger might be to solve his doubts, and pour into his deeply wounded heart the oil and wine of gospel grace. He has read human nature very imperfectly who does not know that there are certain characters who not only *will* or *can* not unbosom to *strangers*, but scarcely to their *nearest* and dearest connexions. Indeed, when individuals have grown up utterly destitute of what may be termed the outward observance of religion; when they have treated its professors as *deceivers* or *deceived*, and the Scripture doctrine of justification by faith as the height of folly and fanaticism; when they have made a *boast* of their proud contempt of the Divine law, and their indifference to all the threatened consequences of impenitence; we cannot wonder at the repugnance they feel to a disclosure of that *inward conflict* which a conviction of their former *error* brings upon them. A *mighty* influence must be exerted ere an individual of a proud, irreligious, and independent spirit, can be brought to the acknowledgment, "*I have been wrong all my life;*" or, in fact, before he can allow *any one* to know that a re-action has commenced; and I feel persuaded that if I had, with a zeal untempered with judgment, urged

poor Frank to receive the visits of a stranger, and, regardless of the sanctity of friendship, had told another what he wished poured only into my own bosom, I should have done harm rather than good ; for although I might *easily* have secured him a far more able adviser and experienced teacher, I could not have removed his own natural reluctance to communicate to another the workings of his anguished spirit : I was therefore necessitated to bear alone the burden which the Lord, in his inscrutable wisdom, had so unexpectedly laid upon me, hourly waiting upon Him to bless my feeble efforts with success.

But, oh, it is impossible that any *human* being can understand my feelings at the moment when, with dying look and faltering voice, he said, “ You must be my teacher ; *I* have been *wrong* all my life, and *you* have been *right* ; but I hope to God it is not *too late* to begin *now* ! Oh, say I may seek and find, what you have known from your childhood.—God as my FATHER and FRIEND.” Of course, I assured him that God’s mercy was infinite, and that he was *fully* welcome to *all* the rich blessings of salvation, if he could only lay hold on Christ as his hope and righteousness. Poor fellow ! his look and his words seemed to say, as the man in the gospel, “ *Who* is

He, Lord, that I *might* believe on him?"* The *atonement* and the *Divine* nature of the great ATONER were a stumbling-block to him : I therefore briefly endeavoured to show him, from the Scriptures, our fall in Adam proved by *our own daily* experience ; and our recovery by Christ, describing as clearly as I could, how God dealt with us federally in Adam ; that as he permitted sin and death to reach us through his disobedience, so to countervail this it seemed good to him to deal with us federally in Christ as the second Adam, ordaining that righteousness and life should reach us through his *perfect obedience* and *sinless sacrifice*. It was not difficult, now that he was feeling something of his own exceeding sinfulness, to convince him that man *had fallen*, and that no fallen being could offer up a *sinless* sacrifice ; but the mystery of godliness—" *God manifest in the flesh*"—which could not be apprehended by reasonings, and deductions, still staggered him. Accustomed to reason on everything, and having often declared that he would not believe what he could not understand, the *Christian* will not wonder that he failed to receive *readily* and *simply* the gospel plan of salvation, and the way of justification by *faith* through the *free* grace of

* John ix. 36.

God. However, my duty was plain—to “have faith in God,” and patience to work with Him, and *for* Him; not crowding the inquiring mind with too much of human theology, nor taxing the awakening spiritual energies with subjects fit only for the established believer. And thus, by God’s grace, I endeavoured to act; but alas! how little did I think, as I at that moment knelt before him, that my time of labour would be so quickly and so suddenly terminated! Not, that from the moment I looked upon him, had I once thought he could possibly live, but I did think he might very probably linger a month or more.

When, fearing to weary him, I ceased speaking, he asked if I could give him a bed, adding, “I do not wish to go to my lodgings, having so much to say to you.” When told a bed should be prepared, he *looked* the thanks he had not power to speak—a look which said, ‘Though I have ridiculed you in years that are past, yet you do not cast me off and reproach me in my hour of need.’”

These and some other matters being arranged, he seemed much more composed, and I began to hope that, if it could be so managed that the call should appear accidental, he might be induced to see a much-esteemed clerical friend of mine, and to whom poor

Frank himself was not altogether a stranger, and, *perhaps, converse* on the subject which was preying on his very vitals. I therefore left the room, and wrote a line to my friend, saying, Mr. R—, whom he had several times met at my house, had just arrived, in a state of health which greatly alarmed me, and that his distress of mind far exceeded his pain of body; and if he could call on me in his usual way during the afternoon, without referring to my request to do so, I should be glad. Accordingly, this dear man of God came, and Frank was more communicative than I had anticipated, although I *could not* prevail on him to see the same friend the next day,—not from dislike, but because, he said, “I find talking to any one else more exciting and distressing than talking to you.” After this visit was ended, my friend led me into another room, and with deep emotion said, “You must not—indeed, you must not—despair; the Lord never will disregard desires so earnest as his.” This gave me encouragement, and made me resolve patiently to use all means to lead him from darkness to light. And even *now* the words of my esteemed friend seem to possess a charm to allay the feverish excitement the effort to recall the past has produced. “*The Lord never will disregard*

desires so earnest as his" echoes in my ear as a cadence of the richest music. And has not my friend's MASTER also told me that *none* shall seek his face in vain? Oh, thrice blessed assurance! the manifested truth of which we have in the dying thief, who in his *last* agonies cried out, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." No multiplicity of words here—no laboured expression of doctrine—but a simple, fervent utterance of the prayer of faith, and that, moreover, the shortest prayer we have on record. How sweet and soothing are these recollections to those whose departed friends have not had time to evidence in their *lives* the *reality* of their change. Would that I could always revert to them when the uncertainty of poor Frank's condition presses upon me. Of course, had I not been the only responsible person in laying the gospel before him, and seeing that he understood it, my feelings would be less acute on the subject than they oft-times are. But, oh! it is a solemn thing to feel that an individual depended *alone* on you for the clear exhibition and *application* of gospel truth, *when* that individual has passed into eternity without leaving behind him a clear assurance of acceptance through the blood of Christ.

During this first evening (Monday) he began conversing on the *permission* of sin. "This," said I, "is a subject far too deep for either of us to enter upon at the present moment; let us rather dwell on the cheering truth that the *remedy* is as extensive as the disease,—that every fallen child of Adam may receive pardon and life through Christ Jesus." This turn of the subject led us to converse freely on the work of Christ, the sinner's surety, which evidently produced a decided effect on his mind, and prepared him to join in family worship with an earnestness and solemnity I had never before witnessed in him.

Early the following morning I went into his room to inquire how he was, and to ask him if he would like his breakfast before we had prayer. "Oh," he said, "are you going to have prayer now? I fully intended to have got up in time to have joined you." My heart bounded with gladdening joy at such a speech, and tears of gratitude rushed to my eyes, for how often in days and months that were past had I known him with us, and showing the greatest indifference to the morning and evening hour of prayer; but *now* he *desired* prayer. "What hath God wrought?" I inwardly exclaimed. To him I

replied, "You need not be uneasy about not being up, for we shall have prayer in the nursery, and with both doors open, you will be able to hear all that passes, and without the fatigue of sitting up." This pleased him, and on returning to him afterwards, I found him deeply affected with the petitions that had been presented at the throne of grace for him. Never before did I see so *marked* a change in any human being; *another* heart, indeed, he had got, a humble and contrite one—a heart broken on account of past forgetfulness of God, and humbled under a feeling sense of his own absolute weakness and vileness. Oh, how ardently did he long for *one* of those years he had but *too* diligently spent in the service of the world. How bitterly did he write condemnation against himself for his own folly! How fervently did he pray for the lengthening out of the feeble span of life, that he might have opportunity to seek after that religion which he now *felt* to be the only thing that could smooth his descent to the lonely grave! But the sands of life were running fast away—alas! how fast!

During the day little opportunity was afforded for close conversation. One or two of his own private friends, who had heard from his doctor of his

return to town, called, and one of them asked if he would like any of his relatives written to. His answer was most emphatic,—“*No*, they can do *nothing* for me *now*. The friend I am with can do all I want or desire. Worldly people can give me no comfort, and I am able to talk but little, so would rather *not* see them, lest I should be disturbed.” After this personal friend had left him, I returned to his room, when he told me what had passed, adding, “You know that no one related to me, or with whom I have been associated, can tell me anything about my never-dying soul, or *how* it is to escape everlasting misery; therefore, why should I distress my mind by seeing them, except it were to show them by my present helplessness of body and agony of mind, the folly and madness of continuing in their present course?”

Much and earnestly as I wished to avoid the responsibility of my position, I could not gainsay his remarks. At the same time I earnestly hoped the Lord would prolong his life for a time; and that he would himself relieve me from my painful and anxious post. When I looked at him, and saw his grateful countenance at being allowed to be under my roof, attended as it was by such an opportunity

of usefulness, I felt that I ought to bear anything ; but when I turned from him to my fatherless children, and considered my own health, I could not help crying earnestly to the Lord to spare me a trial from which nature tremulously shrunk. Under these contending feelings my heart alternately sank and rose. If Frank appeared better for an hour, I hoped that by quiet and attention he might gain strength, as his mind became more calm and tranquil, to be removed to his lodgings ; but if he seemed weaker, my worst fears rushed upon me, and almost overwhelmed me.

This state of alternate hope and fear continued till the Wednesday evening, when he suddenly became worse ; and as I entered the room to see how he felt after his tea, he exclaimed, " Good God ! how shall I bear this night ? " I endeavoured to feed him with a little arrowroot which was just brought in, but the palpitation of his heart prevented his taking more than a spoonful. I sat for some time in silence by him, fearing a word might increase the paroxysm, and then I felt sure *death* must instantly follow. Sad, indeed, were my feelings, but I lifted my heart upward, pleading the promise that as my " day my strength should be." Oh

it is deeply solemn to be alone with an individual whose death is approaching! To see "sin's great conquest, and Satan's chief work consummated;" and that too over one for whom you were feeling intense anxiety as to his *preparedness* to encounter the final conflict! As it drew towards ten o'clock, I became more alarmed. I knew an old friend had been with him early in the evening, with his will, which was to be brought for signature the next morning. I asked him where this friend lived, and whether he would not like him to sit up with him; but his *memory failed*, and he said he could not remember. "But," said he, "he could not do me any good if he were here." I saw how great was his aversion to have people about him, and therefore tried to bear it a little longer, quietly, requesting a servant to sit behind the curtains at the foot of his bed. About eleven o'clock, his breathing seemed a little less difficult, and he urged me to go to bed, saying, "You look very ill." I told him I could not think of going to bed unless he would have some one in the room with him. To this he at length assented, and I immediately sent for a person accustomed to sickness, and placed her at his bedside. After speaking with him some time on God's

tender love towards perishing sinners, and his great delight in receiving and welcoming every returning prodigal, I prepared to leave him. While moving about his room, to see that everything was near that he would be likely to need, his eyes followed me with the most intense expression—an expression which no *words* could embody. On parting, I took his hand, and expressed an earnest wish that God would hear prayer, and give him a little sleep. As I said, “Good night,” he pressed my hand, and with a quivering lip and tearful eye said, “God bless you! bless you!” And these, dear readers, were the *last intelligible* words I heard him utter. Ah! could I have *known this*, no persuasion would have induced me to have left his room. Poor fellow! I now feel convinced that his last unearthly look as I was leaving his room was meant to tell me *how much* he HAD to tell had strength been granted him. Several times during this last day he had said, “I have a great deal to talk to you about, when I feel a *little* stronger.” On leaving him, between eleven and twelve, I had given orders to be called if any change for the worse took place; and even to this moment I cannot help blaming the nurse for not coming to me sooner; but knowing how really ill I

was, she feared to disturb me until I had had a little rest. During the hour and a half I left him he was perpetually speaking of, or asking for me; and in reply to the question, "Have you anything to say to her, sir?" he made a desperate effort to articulate clearly and loudly the words, "Yes, heaps to say to her—heaps to say to her!" The effort necessary to utter these words was almost fatal to him; he sunk back in the bed, and the nurse immediately came to me. Starting up from a confused kind of sleep, as she approached my bed, I hastily asked if he were worse. "I hardly know, ma'am," was the reply, "as I have never seen him before this evening; but he is very ill, and has been talking of you ever since you left him." I fastened on my dressing-gown, and immediately repaired to his room as the clock was striking one. Judge of my surprise and dismay to find him actually *dying*! I sent off for a doctor who lived near, (his own medical attendant resided at too great a distance,) as also for the clergyman who had seen him on the Monday. Both came in a few minutes. The medical man saw at one glance that nothing could be done, but kindly said if it would be any comfort to me he would remain; as a stranger, this of course I did not

wish. He poured a spoonful of wine down his throat, and then said, "I regret to say I can be of no further *use*." Oh, what a thrill of agony did this sentence send through my heart! How bitterly did I regret having left him! How earnestly did I wish that some assurance of his trust in God, and *faith* in the *Redeemer* had reached my ear! But no! when conversing with him during the day, he would say, "*I hope* I shall be better to-morrow, and then I will talk more to you about these things." The *morrow* came,—but before its light had dawned poor Frank was numbered with the silent dead!

The few drops of wine that had been administered had revived him, so as to listen to the conversation addressed to him by my esteemed pastor and friend, and to join in the prayers offered for him. Three times did we kneel around his bed to commit his departing soul to that compassionate Being, who in the plenitude of his mercy saved the dying thief, and gave him faith even in the article of death to rest on him as his *Saviour*. Dear Frank continued sensible to the last moment, and whispered several half-audible words into the ear of my friend, when speaking to him of the love of Jesus. To the very last, also, he showed the deepest gratitude to those

he was with once or twice. Mr. H—— turned to me, and said, “Do come and speak to him again, for he seems to know your voice so much better than mine, and to understand more readily what you say.” As well as my trembling limbs and bursting heart would let me I acceded to this request ; but, oh, it was an effort too great for my bodily and mental strength. The soft pressure of my hand told me Frank understood and appreciated these efforts. At the same time prayer seemed our *best* resource, and indeed our only hope ; for he was now gone too far for us to expect anything beyond a monosyllable, and this we certainly had, which seemed to give us a ray of hope. Mr. H—— had been speaking to him of the love and kindness of Jesus. He, poor fellow, either did not catch the first part of the sentence, or else was wandering before it was finished ; for he replied, “She was always so, always so.” Mr. H—— rejoined, “I am not speaking of Mrs. ——, much as she may love you and feel for you ; I am speaking of one who loves you infinitely more—one who died for you. Do you not love *Jesus better* than ——?” “Yes,” was his emphatic reply, and the last words he uttered. Gradually he sank till a quarter before

four o'clock, when one *deep-drawn* sigh told us the conflict was over, and poor Frank's eternal destiny fixed beyond the possibility of a change: "As the tree falleth so it lieth, and as death leaves us so judgment will find us."

My readers, have you ever stood in the room with death? Have you ever watched the clay tabernacle dissolving? Have you ever seen the gray twilight of morning dart its first pale beam across the lifeless corpse of one dear to you? If so, and I doubt not you have, I trust it was with less unanguished feelings than mine at the moment I saw Frank's *last* gasp. I had so earnestly hoped and fervently prayed that he might *not* be called to his final account till he could say with the apostle, "*I know* in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him;" or with Job, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth*;" that I felt stunned with the suddenness and awfulness of the event. His intense desire and his last emphatic "YES" was a source of *hope*; but to enable us to bear calmly such a trial the mind of the Christian, who has learnt from the Bible the *priceless* value of the immortal soul, requires something like an *assurance* as to the

everlasting safety of departed friends ; but *here* was *uncertainty* up to the very moment of departure ! My chief comfort arose from the thought that the Judge of all the earth *must* do right ; and in his hands I must leave the issue, entreating all who read these pages to make sure work for eternity before the energy of the mind and strength of the body are lost. I am not one to place much confidence in a death-bed repentance ; yet knowing Frank's character as I did, an expression of trust, confidence, or *hope* from him, would have been prized above thousands of gold and silver. He was certainly not the one to cry, "Peace! peace!" to himself, unless the LORD had actually spoken, and said to the storm within, "Peace, be still." From the letters addressed to the friend I introduced to him, I feel sure that a powerful influence had been operating on his mind for at least three months before his death, the extent of which I myself was not aware until after I began this sketch of his character, when letters were kindly sent to me ; one or two of which I shall subjoin, as corroborative of my expressed opinions of his talents.

But first, let us indulge in a few reflections and exhortations. It was not old age or natural in-

firmities that carried off, with so *short* a notice, Frank R—: he had not numbered thirty-one years when the summons came. Only on the Monday previous to his death he had travelled more than fifty miles, and, though very ill, little dreamt that his remaining days were limited to THREE! My readers must also have seen that shining abilities and varied talents cannot bring *peace* to a dying bed—cannot give assurance in a dying hour. They have moreover seen that the confidence of health, and the boasting of *reason*, and the contempt of admonition, leave the anguished mind when death is brought near. Oh! say, then, is it not important to consider your ways?—to inquire *what* is the ground of your hope?—and what the preparation for your encounter with the king of terrors? Remember it is in the DARK valley that you have to meet this all-powerful foe. Not one ray of *earthly* light can show you your enemy's position or advantage; nor can any *earthly* friend ward off the deadly aim of this great conqueror. You *must* encounter him singly and *alone*, so far as *human* help goes. Neither can you postpone his approach for one moment, when “the hour of your departure is come.” Oh, then, is it not madness to trifle with the concerns of

eternity, and the momentous interests of the immortal soul?

"A moment you may want which worlds want wealth to buy."
Oh, then, seize with avidity the golden PRESENT,
and

"Give to God each moment as it flies."

Life is uncertain; and, believe me, you *may* find it impossible, when sickness wastes the frame and weakens the energies of the mind, to abstract your thoughts from the pains and wants of a decaying body, so as to seek with *earnestness* the salvation of the undying soul.

At no period of our lives do we find it a *trifle* to set ourselves in battle array against the inbred corruptions of our nature, and the ever active and powerful enemy of our souls, who "as a roaring and ravenous lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour." Ah, it is no *easy* task to wrestle against flesh and blood, against principalities and powers, and against spiritual wickedness in high places, but requires the most vigilant circumspection, the most determined energy, and *more* than human strength. It is a *race*, and we must *run*—it is a *battle*, and we must *fight*—it is a warfare, and we must *strive*. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all,

but one obtaineth the prize? *So run, that ye may obtain.*” * “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.” † “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” ‡ Most clearly do these passages show us that

“*Health* is the time to serve the Lord,
The time t’insure the great reward.”

No human being ever found that he had too much strength, too much wisdom, or too much *time*, successfully to contend for this prize, manfully to fight in this battle, and courageously to use the weapons of this warfare. Let none, then, presume to think that when they can no longer enjoy or *abuse* the world, there will be time enough for them to give their thoughts to the concerns of the *future* life. Oh be assured it would be a *suicidal mistake*, and one which if persisted in could *never* be rectified, but must plunge you into all the horrors of *eternal misery*, to which *death* is only the *vestibule*! There is the undying worm! the lake of liquid fire! the company of fallen spirits, and that of the most *hated* and *hateful* monsters of our own species, to be

* 1 Cor. ix. 24. † 1 Tim. vi. 12. ‡ Eph. v. 11—18.

endured ! Think, ye careless yet *amiable* ones, for a moment of the misery of accompanying with *millions* of such, **FOR EVER** ! Oh, the very thought makes one's blood run cold, and one's heart leap with fearful bounds ! And yet there are many *young* persons, and many launched in life, sustaining moral and honourable characters, who, if God's word *be true*, have no other hope beyond the dark confines of the grave than such inconceivable horrors. Oh for a trumpet's voice to arouse their death-like souls ! In the words of the ship-master to Jonah, we would say to each, "What meanest thou, O sleeper ? Arise, call upon thy God." The cold waves of the river of death are fast approaching, and if thou delayest they will engulf thee, and thou art lost for ever ! God's mercy cannot save us *out* of the ark. His justice cannot spare us *out* of the city of refuge. In Christ he is *love*—out of Christ a *consuming fire*. "Consider this ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be *none* to deliver." * Ask yourselves whether you can determine for a few brief years of pleasure to renounce all the glories of the heavenly world, and to brave all the horrors of the second death.

Let the *bitter anguish* and early death of Frank admonish you : believe me, it is no tale got up for

the occasion, but a *solemn reality*, which my *own* eyes saw and my own ears heard. Nor has a tenth part been told of those three days' words and agonies. Much, very much, is lodged deep within the recesses of my own bosom, to await the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open ; but enough has been stated to arrest the careless and alarm the sceptic, should God the Spirit deign to bless, for which let us not cease to pray. "He chooseth the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the mighty, that no flesh should glory in his presence."* And if he bless it but to *one* soul my reward will be overpoweringly great. It has cost me many anguished feelings to revert thus minutely to the past, but an inward something whispers, "It shall not be in vain." God in his mercy grant it may not !

Frank's memory will ever be cherished with the deepest interest by me, and though at times the thought will dart with painful vividness through my mind—Was I sufficiently plain and faithful? Did I use *all* means to lead him to the knowledge of Christ crucified?—queries that issue in the upward glance, and fervent cry, "Enter *not* into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!" Yet I feel thankful for the oppor-

* 1 Cor. i. 27—29.

tunity afforded me of not only pointing him, however feebly, to the Saviour, but also of shielding him from the intrusion of worldly associates.

I know but few whose career would have been more brilliant and useful than Frank's, had he been *properly trained*; and to this lack of moral training am I compelled to attribute all the failings which marked his short but eventful life, and the recollection of which so deeply embittered his days and hours of sickness. Should these lines meet the eye of any parents or guardians of youth whose attention has never yet been seriously directed to the training of the immortal soul, oh! how earnestly would I urge them to ponder well the effects of mismanagement, as displayed in the character before us. Look at poor Frank in his sickness—look at him in his death; and then say, can you by your own *criminal* neglect plant with piercing thorns the dying pillow of those who by their youthful vivacity, are now throwing the charm of lighthearted gaiety around your daily path? Blooming as are now their cheeks, and sparkling as are now their eyes, they must sooner or later yield to the icy touch of death, and, by this solemn stroke, be ushered into the presence of their Judge! Can you profess to *love* them, and

yet make no attempts to prepare them for the change of worlds? Is it possible that you can exhaust all your concern on the fleeting honours and pleasures of this life? What are threescore years and ten, to the *unnumbered* ages that lie beyond the boundary of time?—ages that must be passed amid the uncreated glories of heaven, or endured in the regions of despair! As a parent I beseech, ye *entreat*, you to consider these things,—hasten to the secrecy of your closet, and on your bended knees confess your *past* remissness in the discharge of parental duty, and at the same time invoke the proffered aid of the Holy Spirit to enable you to begin without delay a judicious course of *moral* and religious training, such as will at all events leave your own consciences clear, should your children unhappily appear on the *left* hand when the final separation is made! Surely if *any* subject calls for earnestness and self-devotion it is this; trifling or lukewarmness *here* is madness—and such we may be sure it will be accounted ere long, not only by Him who cannot err, but by *ourselves* also. Pray, then, O pray for heavenly wisdom and spiritual enlightenment to train for a blissful immortality those priceless treasures committed to your care. But

train them by *actions* as well as by words; children are eagle-eyed and can most readily detect the least discrepancy between our teaching and our conduct. Some parents, whose desire for their children, we cannot doubt, is that they may grow up in the fear of the Lord, are often found crying in secret, "O that my Ishmaels may live before thee," yet, from inadvertency or lack of clear moral perception, they unhappily give their children a disgust *to*, instead of exciting their love *for* religion, thereby rendering more difficult the task of leading them into the good and the right way.

Christian parents have need to be most watchful over their tempers, and most careful over the expression of their opinions. *One* hasty word, one passionate look, one *un*-just reproof, may do incalculable mischief to those we desire to influence. Assuredly, whatever we may say or do, if our example is not *uniformly* consistent, we shall be pointing with our finger to heaven, but in reality leading our children down to the shades of death! Mr. James, of Birmingham, in his "Christian Father's Present to his Children," has stated some of the hindrances to a religious education, among which are the following:—

“Religious education is oftentimes very ignorantly, negligently, and capriciously maintained where it is not altogether omitted. It is not a *first* object; it is attended to with no earnestness, no anxiety, no *system*, no regularity. It does not run through everything, and is opposed by many things at variance with it. The parents’ eye and heart are often, too often, fixed upon the worldly prosperity and respectability of their children, rather than on their religious character.” When this is the case, can we wonder at our frequent parental failures? Can we wonder that so many hearts are bleeding over worldly and vicious children? The husbandman *expects* to reap according to that he sows, and so *shall* we, whether we expect to do so or not: if we sow to the flesh, whether individually or *relatively*, we shall of the flesh reap corruption; but if we sow to the Spirit, in a holy consistent course of parental discipline, we shall of the Spirit reap life and joy!

Mr. James says again, and most truly, that another powerful impediment in the way of success to a truly Christian education is, the relaxation of domestic discipline. “There are in some houses no family government, no order, no subordination. The children are kept under no restraint, but are

allowed to do what they like. Their faults are unnoticed and unpunished, and their tempers allowed to grow headstrong, till in fact the whole family become rebellious against parental authority and unamiable to all around."

This, alas, is another state of things not unfrequently found in the houses of *Christian* parents, indeed it has been often cast as a reproach *peculiar to them!* Would that it was altogether without foundation, and that all Christian homes presented the cheering sight of a well-disciplined family! Oh! that system of over-indulgence is a *cruel* system—cruel to the children, cruel to society, and cruel to the parents themselves. Negative mischiefs are not the only results of such cruelty; an infinite train of *positive* evils follow in the rear.

Parents, be warned, and hold the reins of discipline with a tender but *firm* hand; strive to manifest an *undeviating* consistency of conduct so that your children may not be able to draw invidious comparisons. The most vigorous of our English authors has said that "the highest panegyric private virtue can receive is the praise of *servants*, for they see us without any restraint or rule but such as we voluntarily prescribe to ourselves." Johnson is

doubtless right, and the *same* sentiment might with equal truth have been applied to *children*. If they cherish in their own bosoms a bright testimony to our Christian consistency in *all* things, we need covet no higher praise, and may rest assured we shall *not labour in vain* in the matter of their souls' salvation :—" In *due* time we shall 'reap if we faint not.'" See how Abraham's parental faithfulness was rewarded,* and the unfaithfulness of Eli punished ;† let the one stimulate and encourage us, and the other warn and admonish. We have to do with the same jealous God now as the father of the faithful, and the high priest and judge of Israel. Thus our duty is *stereotyped* on the page of inspiration, with the reward attached to its *faithful* discharge, and the punishment annexed to impious neglect. Let us turn Manoah's question to the angel into a prayer of the 'deepest earnestness to the God of angels; "Lord, how shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?" ‡ The work appointed is far above our wisdom and far beyond our strength, nor can any perform it effectually who do not with simplicity of purpose seek the

* Gen. xviii. 17, 18. † 1 Sam. ii. 27—36; iii. 11, 14.

‡ Judges xiii. 12.

wisdom which cometh from above, and is alone profitable to *direct* us in the discharge of these our arduous and responsible duties. *Prayer* and *effort* must go hand in hand, if we hope for happy results. Oh yes, the Christian parent *must* work as well as pray, or he *tempts* instead of trusts God. The husbandman would be thought most senseless who should be seen daily watering a field into which he had cast *no* grain; and does a parent show his wisdom who leaves *all* to prayer? Assuredly not—let us press as *fervently* and faithfully as though it were our *only* means, and *labour* as though there were *no* prayer, or children will then grow up as “trees of righteousness, the *planting* of the Lord, that he may be glorified!”

And now, ye that are young, who are disposed to treat as unimportant the question of your soul's salvation, suffer me to address a few lines to *you*. Have you weighed well the consequences of appearing before the great white throne *unrenewed* and *unforgiven*? Have you deliberately resolved to brave the anger of him “Who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell?” Have you duly considered the point, and *determined* that it will be no *great hardship* to *feel* the gnawings of the undying worm, and the flames of the unquenchable fire? Oh! think

again, I beseech you, before you go further. Turn to the ninth chapter of St. Mark and ponder well the eight last verses, and compare them with other scriptures equally awful, such as Rev. xx. 15 ; Matt. xxv. 40 ; John v. 29 ; and then ask yourselves, is it nothing to depart with a “ *Go, ye cursed ?* ” Is it nothing to rise from your graves, only that your *body* as well as soul may be under the dominion of the *second* death ? Is it *nothing* to find your name *not* written in the book of life, and, as the penal consequence, to be “ cast into the lake of fire ? ” Is all this *nothing* ?—These words have no meaning, and the eternal God no power, if all *this* is NOTHING ! The eternal God, did we say, NO POWER ?—witness, ye powers of darkness ; ye fallen angels, speak ! and thou flooded earth, and ye cities of the plain, answer the awful question ! Ah, in *one* sense *words* have no meaning, inasmuch as they fail to convey a thousandth part of the dread reality ! My young readers, will you believe this, or shall *experience only* convince you ? Will you let a daring and presumptuous recklessness of consequences push you on to the very brink of the precipice ? What !—when in an instant you may be plunged into the gulf beneath ? Oh ! again I say, pause and think.

Some alas ! I know, who, although the offspring of

godly parents, too strongly resemble Frank R— Proud, daring and independent, they act as though they were *not accountable* to God for their manifest indifference to his commands, his word, his house. Instead of obedience to parents we see *dis-obedience* ; instead of submission to constituted authority, rebellion against it ; instead of humility, self-conceit ; prayer is neglected, the Bible despised, meek entreaty met with defiance, faithful warning scorned. Yes ! and not unfrequently a MOTHER'S SIGHS and TEARS treated with callous indifference ! But am I sure that in the last sentence I am writing *truth* ? Can it be that a *child* can see a *mother* in tears, and moreover know that those tears are caused by his ungrateful, and unfilial conduct, and yet treat them with indifference ? Yes, *unnatural* and deeply criminal as such conduct is, we have been *witness* to it in more than one instance,, and the heart has throbbed with feelings of bitter anguish, at such a sight. Better would it be never to have felt a *mother's joy*, or to have had that joy quickly succeeded by the tears shed over an early grave than that our children should commit such sin, and we be the subject of such sorrow !

My youthful readers, are *you all* clear in this

matter? Do you render ready and cheerful obedience to those whom God, by natural ties, has placed over you? "Children, obey your parents in all things," is the command to which there is but *one* exception, and that is when *their* commands are opposed to the commands of God—then obedience would be *sin*. There is no sight on earth more enchanting than that of filial devotion, nor is there any more deplorable than that of a child destitute of this filial reverence, obedience, and love.

Should these pages fall into the hands of a child who causeth shame and sorrow, I would say to him, Be *warned*. Forget not that you are held *responsible* by a higher power for the happiness of those who gave you birth. You stand at the fountain of domestic life, and may either sweeten or embitter its waters. From your dutiful conduct, not from *wealth*, your parents' happiness flows. The wealth of the two Indies could not make that parent happy who is cursed with an ungrateful child. Dear children, ponder well these things, and may the Lord give you understanding to act according to his commands. You will then not only *rightly* discharge your moral duties, but will study his holy word, overcome your indifference to his house of

prayer, and delight in *secret* communion with him. How pleasant to walk hand in hand with your parents to that heavenly home where death cannot divide, nor sorrow cloud. How happy would Frank have been had he been blessed with godly parents. *Your* neglect of religion is tenfold more criminal than his. You have the good and the right way set before you, *he had not* ; you are actually *allured* into the way of life, he was *led* into the broad road that leads to death ; you have daily prayer offered for you, and with you, his parents knew not how to pray for themselves ; *you* are guarded from temptation, *he was* exposed to it ; *you* are taught that religion is the one thing needful, *he poor fellow* was only taught to look upon it with ridicule and scorn. There is, therefore, no *excuse* for your neglect of Christianity. I do not mean to say you cannot *frame* excuses, but will they hold good by-and-by ? Will you, *my young friends*, with all your present pride and heedlessness, be disposed to offer to the great Searcher of hearts the futile excuses with which you now distress your friends, and *try* to satisfy yourselves ? Dare you tell *Him* that you thought religion of no consequence ? Look up ! See the dazzling brightness of that throne, and the still more ineffable glory of Him who is seated

thereon! Listen to the mighty crash of elements! Nature reels! The dead are rising, the despised Saviour is descending! Are you ready with your excuses? Offer them now, if you can. Ah! I see you turn pale with inward horror! I hear your bitter invocation, "Fall on us ye mountains, ye hills cover us." Ah me! I see the book open and your names not there! I hear the voice louder than many waters, pronounce the dreaded sentence, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Careless sinner, what will now become of thee? Is there now no truth in God's word, no power in God's arm? To dwell long on such a theme would chill one's very vitals. Gladly we turn from the mournful scene to prefer at our Father's throne the earnest prayer that you may see your folly before it be *too late*. For ourselves we could well bear the lip of scorn and the taunt of ridicule in return for our exhortations and admonitions, did we not *know* that this line of conduct will recoil with fearful vengeance on your own devoted heads! Beware, then, how you indulge in it, lest haply you be found *fighting* against God. You and your *faithful* friends *must* meet another day, but *then* it will be *too late* to appeal to them for counsel

or advice ; too late to retract one haughty expression ; too late to show your sorrow for past neglect ; too late to tread in a holier and *safer* road.

To the youthful disciple of our Master, Jesus, this brief sketch of Frank R—— also speaks. And what does it say ? It speaks of the world, with its misnamed pleasures ; of life, with its cares and pains, and woes ; of death, with its hasty strides ; and of eternity, with its momentous concerns. It exhorts you, in a language more forcible than words, to work while it is called *to-day* ; to seek by every means within your power the rescue of precious souls from the bondage of sin and Satan ; to preach to all around by a *holy* consistency of conduct in the unselfish dedication of your varied powers to the service of Jesus. Let all see that though in the world you are *above it*, that though exposed to conflict you are *clad in armour*, kept bright by the constant application of blood divine ! Let them see that however difficult your path may be, you can call in a sufficiency of strength to *overcome*. Remember the promise, “As thy day is so shall thy strength be.” “The *worm* Jacob shall thresh the mountains.” Plead it moment by moment, and day by day. Try to single out some *special* object of interest, not to

the *neglect* of others, (for all souls are precious) but on whom to spend some of those *extra* energies, which all young converts, if their religion be in a *healthy* state, most assuredly *have*; who knows but that they may be given to you as a crown of rejoicing at the appearing of Jesus Christ? Be not discouraged because you are young, but “be an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity,” 1 Tim. iv. 12. “Continue in the things you have learned and been assured of, knowing *of whom* you have heard them,” (2 Tim. iii. 14) Jesus Christ the faithful and true witness. Be much in secret communion with God, in his *word*, and at his footstool, and then your usefulness and happiness is secured. The dwarfish state of many Christians is solely attributable to the neglect of this *first* duty. The individual who is constantly drawing in the sincere milk of the word and the refreshment of secret prayer, must grow and increase in heavenly wisdom; nor will such a one dare to live unto himself, but will freely consecrate his time, his talents, his influence to the Being he professes to love. It is often a source of wonder to me that as Christians we do *so little* for Him who emptied himself of all *but love* for our salvation, and is every

moment pleading at the court above his conflicts and victories, his sufferings and merits, his untold agonies and bitter death for our acceptance. Oh, when we think of all that *has* been done, and *is* still doing for us, and of that inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, which is in reserve, we may well blush at the poor return we make. Surely we must *all* confess that “unto us belongeth shame and confusion of face.” Quicken, Almighty Spirit, our dead souls, arouse our sluggish spirits, and help us to lay aside every weight, and run with untiring activity the race set before us, taking up with cheerfulness *every* cross, seizing upon every opportunity of usefulness, and not counting our lives dear unto us, so that we may fulfil our course *usefully*, and finish it with joyfulness! Oh my young friends, fellow-pilgrims with me from a world of sin, and want, and woe, to a world of light, and life, and joy, *loiter not, linger not, wander not*; shun all by-paths; do not sleep and lose your roll, do not trifle with or blemish it; keep every line clearly marked with the blood of the Lamb slain! It is only this blood that can keep Satan at a distance and the conscience quiet: “When you rise in the morning and lie down at night, when you are going *to* duty, and when you are coming *from* duty wash

in this blood." There is no safety, there is no comfort, there is no peace, *apart* from this cleansing, vivifying stream. Young disciple let me entreat you to make *much* use of it, to "deal *closely* with it," and then your soul will be as a well-watered garden *sending forth its fragrance*. And while "the spices thereof flow out,* the yearning of your soul will find expression in the language of the happy spouse, "Let my beloved come into *his* garden and eat his pleasant fruits." No sooner is this loving wish expressed, than the answer greets the ear, "I *un-*come into my garden, my sister, my spouse," and "here will I give thee my loves ; † here will I reveal myself unto thee otherwise than I do unto the world ; here will I make thee to rejoice with that joy which is *unspeakable* and full of glory!—Art thou burdened ? I will relieve thee. Art thou depressed ? I will cheer thee. Art thou persecuted ? I will defend thee. Art thou scorned ? I will honour thee. Art thou weak and fearful ? I will strengthen and encourage thee. Nothing is too hard for me, nothing so desperate but my sufficiency can reach !" Christian ! believe you this ; have you in *lively* exercise that faith which is the sure "substance

* Canticles, iv. 16.

† Ibid. vii. 12.

of things hoped for, the clear evidence of things not seen?" If so, you believe that *all* power in heaven and on earth are given to the beloved of your soul! You believe that in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and moreover, you believe that all this power, this wisdom, this knowledge are made over to you by virtue of your union with Him; you may therefore echo the triumphant language of the apostle, "If God be for us, who can be against us? Who is he that condemneth? . . . I am *more* than conqueror through Him that loved me." • Rom. viii. 31, 34, 37.

Is there anything the worldling enjoys to be compared with your privilege, your happiness? And will you not seek to bring a large amount of glory to Him who has put such honour, such dignity upon you? Should you not like to reap a *full* reward,* and not be ashamed before him at his coming? Should you not like to be greeted with a "*well done thou good and faithful servant?*" Oh then trade diligently with your talents, put them *all* out to usury, bury not one in the earth, lay not up one in a napkin. Spiritual wealth can be gained far more *surely* than

* 1 John ii. 28.

temporal ; would we could make those think so who are only concerned to add house to house, and field to field. There is no fear of the Bank *above* breaking. All the bills drawn on our *Divine* treasury will be honoured and duly paid ; millions of these bills are presented daily, but it is still *full* to overflowing ! Giving does not impoverish, the saints' Treasurer, nor empty his treasury ; when the *last* bill shall be honoured and paid he will be rich as ever, his resources as inexhaustable, and the Christian may exultingly say,—

“ I must have all things and abound.

While God is God to me.”

While addressing the young disciple with which I intended to have closed, it has occurred to me, that there is another class of readers that may draw deeply-important lessons from Frank's life and death—it is the *almost* Christian ; those who go far in religion but not *far enough*, who are *convinced* but not converted ; who like Saul have another heart, but not a *new* one. *Many* such I know, and know them to be like the young man in the Gospel whom the Saviour declared not far from the kingdom of heaven. But O will it think you be any advantage

to him by-and-by that he was once pronounced *not far* from the kingdom of heaven, if he is shut out from the kingdom of *glory*?—yea more, will the *love* which as man the Saviour felt for him be found in any way to mitigate his fearful loss? rather, on the contrary, will not the reflection aggravate his torments, and increase his misery?

Oh ye borderers on the true church of the living God, do you not see in Frank's sudden departure a powerful, unanswerable argument for decision? Does the Saviour demand anything too powerful, or too difficult to be given up? Have you, like the young man who came *running* to Jesus, *great* possessions of wealth, of pleasures, of honours; and are *these* things more precious in your estimation than his grace? Can you not cut off the right hand, or pluck out the right eye? Remember, you have not *yet tasted* the sweets of *his grace*, so that you are not *impartial* judges. I can introduce you to those who have tried the pleasures of the world and the pleasures of godliness, and their testimony make the former

“In counterpoise fly up and kick the beam.”

Hear one who has not long turned into the road that leadeth to Mount Zion writing of trials—“All this

makes me value prayer, more and more. I feel I can go to a kind Father, and ask him for help in every difficulty. Oh, it is indeed an unspeakable privilege! I take every thing to Christ, and there leave it. I know that every thing is for my good; and when I look upon trials in that light, I *would not* wish them removed by any act of mine, supposing I could, if it were not my Father's will. When I leave my room of a morning I feel I have strength given me for the day, and I leave it in *confidence*."

. . . . Again, "I know I need not ask you to pray for me. I sometimes am almost afraid I am too happy, but indeed it is not because I am not alive to my own danger and sinfulness: but I can, blessed be God, rely so fully and entirely on Christ—the gospel plan of salvation seems so clear, so Divine, and so *comforting*; that all *fear* has passed away, and I feel it is indeed a God of love I serve. Sometimes the thought arises, can I be a Christian and yet act *thus*? but I *know* I believe in Christ, and I know he will in nowise cast me out;—*this* and *this only* is my hope. If I look at myself, I see enough sin in one short hour to sink my soul in hell; but I see *in Christ still more* grace, his righteousness is imputed unto me. I know that my best actions do indeed

need the all-cleansing blood of Christ, for sin is mixed with *all I do*, but yet I can rejoice and enter with boldness into the holiest."

Do not these few lines describe a state of mind far happier than can possibly be enjoyed in a state of indecision? Here is a *calm* meeting and *patient* bearing of trial, combined with a confidence in the love of God and trust in Christ, which casts far into the shade the fitful evanescent delights of the worldling. Come then, my young friends, halt no longer between two opinions. The pleasures you are loath to leave can never yield you such a rich harvest of joy as falls to the lot of the one from whose letters I have quoted. All you are trying to grasp is *shadow*,—this redeemed one enjoys in *substance*, which will not at death leave the soul naked and unarmed. The same substance is offered to you if you will leave the fond pursuit of *shadows*, and seek it with *earnestness* of Him who died to purchase all for you,

"Come then be his in every part,
Nor give him *less* than *all* your heart!"

Indeed, he will not accept a *divided gift*. It was not a divided gift he offered to the Father on your behalf. He gave himself, a *whole burnt-offering* :

and when the fire of God's wrath descended shrunk not, but allowed himself to be bound and led away to the sacred spot where he poured out his soul unto death, that you might not *of necessity* be condemned to the second death. When you follow your divine Redeemer from Gethsemane to the judgment-hall—when you see the meek sufferer condemned at Pilate's bar; when you listen to the haughty interrogation, "Knowest thou not that I have power to *crucify* thee, and power to release thee?" and hear the meek reply, "Thou couldst have no power at all except it were given thee from above;"* when you see him in imagination wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, *bearing his cross*—can you, dare you hesitate to give him your *little* all?

I cannot but think, that in the eternity that is to follow the awful day of judgment, the feelings of the *almost* Christian will be a thousand times more maddening than those of the profligate and profane. The thought of how near they once were to heaven's eternal joys—how many worldly follies they forsook—the frequent strivings of the Spirit—the unnumbered times that religion appeared as

* John xix. 10, 11.

the "one thing needful" in their estimation; yet fools as they were, that they put off, and put off closing with it, till a more convenient season: all these reflections will add many a poisoned drop to the too bitter cup! Would that you would believe it now dear readers, and let this be the warning voice that you will *effectually heed*. The sight of the *half-way* Christian always makes me feel sad, for I am sure he cannot enjoy the world, and I am still *more* sure that he *does* not enjoy religion, and from my heart I *pity* them. They lose the light heartedness of the regular pleasure-hunters, and get nothing in its place; and too often the melancholy of their appearance is charged on religion; when, in fact, it is the *want* of it, which makes them of a sorrowful countenance. A true Christian *must* be *lively* and active. He knows he labours for a good Master, and he is sure of his reward: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," is perpetually sounding in his ears, to encourage him in duty, and to cheer him when faint. What then has he to depress him? What to make him discontented? If either of you were promised an earthly crown, and a rich inheritance at any given period, however long you might have to

wait for it, I question whether you would ever be really sad: and if the Christian believes his Bible no more can he, all the depression of the child of God arises simply from his want of *faith*; *nothing could* possibly cast *him* down if he kept his eye *steadily* fixed on the recompence of reward. But this cannot be said of the individual who only *looks* at religion, and *thinks* it desirable, nor of those who flatter themselves they are Christians because they have godly parents, and are thereby kept from worldly amusements, and led to religious ordinances. Religion, my young friends, is a purely *personal* thing—all the faith of all the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs, cannot by any possibility save a soul that is *destitute* of faith. Do not, then, presume on the advantage of religious parentage. Godly parents are an inestimable blessing, but they *cannot* take you to heaven in virtue of their piety. You must repent for *yourself*, pray for *yourself*, believe for *yourself*, or saved you cannot be. Oh then delay not to turn your feet into the way of peace; content not yourself with being, as it were, in the *porch* of the true church; (I use the word *Church* as it is used in Acts, ii. 47, and *not* with reference to a visible edifice,) but enter in and taste

of its life-giving dainties. Baptism will not save you, confirmation will not save you, nor even as St. Augustine says, “pressing with your teeth” the elements of a dying Saviour’s love: ’tis the *heart* and the heart alone, that Jehovah requires, “My son give me thine heart;” without this all is mere tinsel—a garnished sepulchre. The Lord grant, my young friends, that you may lay these things to heart before the day of grace is passed, then I shall not have written nor you read of Frank R—in vain.

I now give, as I promised, one or two of his letters, as illustrative of his character, addressed, as I said, to the same Christian friend I have before mentioned, and who laboured much for his salvation :

“My dear ——,

“Any apology in the world that ingenuity could invent, I should blush to make to you for my long and apparently inexcusable silence ; but I think I know your nature too well to doubt that, when you are convinced it has proceeded entirely from ill-health and over-employment, you will both pity and forgive me. I am writing this note to you from my bed, where I have been ever since the middle of the day on Tuesday. * * * *

My instructions are from my medical adviser, Dr. D——, of Hanover-square,—they are very simple : Remain in bed, take pills and draughts, drink tea and thin broth, and hope for improvement,—but despair of getting fat. Of course I submit to the infliction, now that it has come, with a great deal of resignation ; 'tis my own fault—I pressed dame Nature too hard,” [this was by his midnight studies,] “and now that the old lady is offended, I must spend some time in courting a return of her good graces. It affords to me a useful opportunity for contemplation—the sister of wisdom—and with whom, in solitude,

‘ Wisdom’s self

Oft plumes her feathers and let grow her wing,
Which, in the various bustle of resort,
Are oftentimes ruffled and sometimes impaired.’

I quote from memory, and may not be quite correct. I have been thinking this morning of the pleasures of life, and think they resolve themselves into those of hope and memory. The green, fresh, poetical hope of youth, the eager, excited, and ambitious hopes of middle age—both equally vain ; and yet in the former lives everything that is loveable on earth. Then there are the pleasures of memory for old age, and those of hope extends beyond the grave.

“I cannot say that I clearly understand what it is you wish to know by the algebraical expression you have sent me, but I think you want an explanation of *negative* exponents, which is nothing more than a convenient form of expressing the *reciprocals* of quantities ; the reciprocal of a *quantity* is *unity*, divided by *that quantity* thus : * * *” [Here follow the algebraical expression and its workings, which would be useless to transcribe.]

A few months later, and just three before his last illness, he wrote to the same friend who, it seems, from the address and style of the letter, had written to me of some dream she had had, the particulars of which have now escaped my memory.

“My dear Dreamer of Dreams,—

“I have this evening passèd a couple of hours with ——— ; and if I had not illness and a bad cold as an apology, I should be ashamed to tell you it is the first evening I have spent with her since you were at the house. I heard parts of your letters read, including the report of your horrible dreams. I know not why, but a certain something chilly began to crawl over me, and a strong convic-

tion that I should be included in the list ; instead of which you disposed of my ———. Pray, had you been brooding that evening more darkly than usual ? —or had you been supping with Macbeth's witches, on ' eye of newt, toe of frog,' &c. ?—or, more wisely, had you been like my friend Tam o' Shanter,

‘Sitting bousing o'er the nappy,
And getting fou and unco' happy ?’

Truly it was a strange freak of one or more of the bumps in your cranium thus to get kissing the cold cheek of death !

* * * * *

“ I can't get rid of my teasing throat-cough, and my throat is getting sore : I am convinced it will not leave me until, somehow or somewhere, I get out of town. The fact is, the bodily health is altogether out of order. The life I am leading is at war with my nature. * * * I often think, why kill oneself for a living ?—if this is not a contradiction in terms. The only chance, if I had the moral courage to throw the die, and break the one or two ties I have that bind me here, is to make a long trip to the colonies—say New Zealand—to cultivate the *formicum tenax*, which, in *vulgo vocato*, means flax ; —mind, with a view to health and fortune, not a

‘crowner’s quest.’ I have now served twelve years’ apprenticeship to a London life ; it has its charms and its many advantages—but to be chained to it, ‘ay, there’s the rub!’—’tis the slavery of it makes me hate it. I love trees and green fields, and cornfields, and to make familiar friends of horses, dogs, cows, sheep, and pigs, and every living creature ; they are to me a source of interest and amusement, and I could sit for hours by a wood-side, as Gil Blas says, making dialogues for birds :

‘I’ve often wish’d that I had clear
For life six hundred pounds a year !
A handsome house to lodge a friend,
A river at my garden’s end,
A terrace-walk, and half a rood
Of land, set out to plant a wood.’

Bah ! bah !—here am I in this matter-of-fact work-a-day world actually becoming unimaginative, and copying poetry ! And yet, why not ? the love of these objects is natural to the human heart—or whence the hyacinths in our windows, and the little China rose, or the little geranium, in the little pots tended with the most affectionate care in the dirtiest holes and alleys of smoky London, struggling for life, yet sure to die, and then to be replaced by

another and another ; or why does the city daily-dweller, as he comes into town on a spring morning, (particularly if he be a bachelor,) buy a moss-rose or a bunch of violets, and having placed them in his button-hole, tread the ground with a firmer step and think himself a more important personage ? As I said before, it is in our nature to love these things, and I verily believe the companionship of childhood, and the care of a garden, have, beyond all others, the best and most powerfully humanising effects on the human heart.

* * * * *

“ By-the-by, I hear from Mrs. M—— that, in the parish of —— — there is a small colony of savages, composed of males and females, and consequent little ones ; vulgarly speaking, the members are known as brickmakers. Now it appears that this aforesaid colony is so desperately wicked that neither the Lady Bountifuls nor even the parsons of the different parishes will visit it, being deterred therefrom by fear. Mrs. M—— has seriously proposed to me that I should undertake to civilise and Christianise this community—the mode of proceeding being, cakes and oranges in one pocket, and tracts in the other, to be duly administered, in

proper proportions, at the discretion of the Reformer. I seriously assure you that I regarded the proposition as the highest compliment I ever received; and I much regret that modesty, and a deep sense of my own unfitness and unworthiness, have compelled me to decline the honour."

An extract from a paper found in his desk, written a year before his death, shall follow these extracts from his letters, as it shows still more clearly the workings of his mind :

"I feel I occupy a false position in society. A thousand times I have wished that I was my own grandson. I feel that I am out of my place, uneasy, ashamed, proud, resentful. I have asked myself in what manner I can escape from this state; there appears but two ways, one is * * * * *; the other, to bend all my energies to the obtaining of wealth. * * * * * Every contingency, to every man and every creature, doth preach a funeral sermon, and calls us to see how the old sexton Time throws up the earth, and digs the grave where we must at length lay both our sins and our sorrows."

Surely these extracts, while they show the workings

of a superior mind, will also show that the world is an unsatisfying portion, and that the worldling has no legitimate fountain of happiness from which to draw, however much the pent-up soul may thirst for it. Happy would it have been for Frank if, when feeling himself in an uneasy position, he had sought that which hath "the promise of *this* life, and of that which is to come." Happy would it have been could he have laid his pride and his resentment at the foot of the cross, and have said,

"Lord, I come to *thee* for rest,
Take possession of my breast;
There thy blood-bought right maintain,
And without a rival reign ;"

at once and for ever all his heart sorrows would have been soothed, his wounded spirit healed, and his search after happiness satisfactorily terminated. Poor Frank, thy heart often aches at the remembrance of thee. I traced in thy character much of true nobleness, which with a judicious fostering hand would have yielded a plentiful harvest. Oh that when the mysteries of this dark world shall be explained, thou mayest be found as a gem in the Mediator's crown ; like the dying thief, saved, justified and sanctified at the eleventh hour !

I know nothing is too hard for the Lord ; if he work, none can let or hinder. My only hope now is, that others may take warning and avert from their dying bed the anguish Frank endured. This hope has induced me to write, and this hope will still, - I trust, encourage me to *pray*, that all who read these lines may while in health experience the mercy of God the Father, the love of God the Son, and the sanctifying influences of God the Holy Ghost ! Then, whether death comes early or late, with long warning or unexpectedly, they will have nothing to fear, but may calmly enter the dark valley, and in the last extremity of dying nature joyfully exclaim, " O death where is thy sting ? O grave where is thy victory ! Thanks be unto God who hath given ME the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ ' "

THE TWO SUFFERERS.

PART II.

Joy' and Peace.

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Joy and Peace.

AN eloquent living writer says that “unity in diversity, and diversity in unity is the law of nature, and that creation would be dull if all its boundless variety of shape and colour were to give place to one unbroken uniformity.”* To the intellectual and enlightened mind the task is deeply interesting of searching out and classifying these varied productions of creative power in the *kingdom of nature*; each of which in its own way and degree speaks forth the wisdom and beneficence of that mighty Former, who has filled the immensity of space with the wonders of his almighty skill.

The silent glory of the starry heavens—the sparkling loveliness of the morning dew—the infinite skill displayed in every blade of grass that yields to the summer zephyr, and every little floweret heedless

* M. D'Aubigné.

Man treads beneath his feet—the stately oak that has weathered the tempests of centuries, and the lowliest shrub on the country heath, with “the hyssop that creeps on the wall,” tells each in its turn ~~a tale~~ of love, and invites the Christian to contemplate the glorious honour of His majesty, and of His *wondrous works*, “who spake and it was done—who commanded and it stood fast.”

But there is yet another employment of higher import and more sacred interest, that silently but irresistibly demands the full exercise of all those faculties with which man has been so munificently endowed; namely, the investigation of the Spirit’s work in the *kingdom of grace*; and as we proceed in this investigation, we shall find it displays not less “diversity in unity” than is exhibited in the kingdom of nature.

It is an employment in which angels love to be engaged, for it unfolds to their wondering gaze the mighty efficacy of REDEEMING LOVE in rescuing souls from the thralldom of sin and the dominion of the powers of darkness, and reinstating them in the favour and image of God! Every step taken in the investigation of this stupendous subject fills the soul with mingled feelings of wonder, gratitude,

and love. By the fall, man lost the bright and unsullied image of his glorious Former. His powers of mind and body became degenerate and enfeebled, and had he been dealt with only in a way of justice, never would he again have been restored to the *right* path. But at this point of our sad history the mysterious promise of a Saviour was given, and the plan of human redemption began its unfoldings. Since that time myriads of our race have been rescued from the ruins of the fall, and have experienced the mercy of our God in "the day star from on high" visiting their benighted minds, and shedding upon them the bright beams of light and life, and love.

Delightful is the task to search out and delineate the various graces of individual character as *inwrought* by the special influence of the holy transforming Spirit which St. Paul tells us "divideth to every man severally as he will;" so that wherever there is a stone intended by the great master Builder to adorn the spiritual temple, it matters nought how deeply or how firmly it may be lodged in the quarry of nature, nor how great and varied may be the impediments in the way of its extrication, the Spirit *Himself* undertaking the work overcomes the resistance and raises that stone, and

cuts and polishes it, and fits it for the proper niche it is appointed to fill. Oh, how truly beautiful every thing is ordered as to time, and place, and circumstance, as it respects His own *predestinated* people! ~~All~~ outward things may be against them, up to the very moment when those means are to be put in motion, which, before this fair universe was framed, the eternal Mind had determined to employ as best adapted to the individual case. The subject of this wondrous planning may be alone in the trackless desert, or exposed on the deceitful ocean; moving in the gay circles of fashion, or dragging out a pitiable existence in some loathsome cellar in our over-crowded cities; he may possess all his bodily senses unimpaired, or he may be shut out from social intercourse by the loss of any or all of them,—none of these things can thwart *Omnipotence*! The power of the Spirit in *leading* and *guiding* those whom grace has designed to rescue, is *invincible*. He finds the soul dark as the shades of death, but soon life and moral beauty begin to appear! “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” is a question which never has, and never can be answered but by a **NEGATIVE**, for verily the Spirit of God is *not* bound. The subjects of His operations are chosen from all grades of society; the

learned and polite must "become fools" in their own esteem, that they may be made truly wise; while the illiterate and unrefined have only to wait submissively on this great Teacher, in order to become wise unto salvation.

It has been said by one of the simplest and sweetest of our poets, that there is

"No soil like poverty for growth divine;"

our almost daily observation testifies to the truth of this assertion; and certainly the record contained in the following pages will not condemn Cowper's opinion.

Never perhaps did there exist a more striking contrast between two characters than is exhibited by the subject of the first part of this volume, and the one I am now to describe.

Frank esteemed the cross of Christ as "foolishness," till the world was felt to be receding from his view. To Matilda it is her life, her boast, her joy. "God forbid," is the language of her inmost soul, "that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." "I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me." So precious is the Saviour to her soul that life would be a blank without him; and heaven itself, but for the hope of seeing him as he

is, would offer no attractions to her. Standing as she does on the threshold of eternity, she is full of faith, and love, and thankfulness; a heavenly peace illumines her countenance, for the Spirit in His softening, reviving, and refreshing grace, "has entered her soul, speaking of the glorious beauty of Jesus, and leading her to repose on His bosom of love, and often in the midst of severest weakness to sing,

"I live, His power to show, who once did bring
My joys to weep, and now my griefs to sing."

A religion which can give peace and confidence the absence of health, and what the world terms *comfort*, cannot be a delusion, nor a "cunningly devised fable," but must be *from* God, as it tends *to* God. Let us then investigate it more closely, by tracing its commencement and onward motion in this afflicted saint. *Every* human being *is* interested in the religion of the Bible as professed by his fellow-man! Whatever be his condition, whatever his colour, whatever his attainments, or whatever his meanness, if he comes before us as taught by THE SPIRIT, he immediately assumes an interest in our eyes which nothing else can excite. We long at once to know how, and when, and where he met with his DIVINE TEACHER; what were the feelings at first awakened, and *how* he

attained to the calm and peaceful demeanour, the firm confidence, the aspiring hope, the strong faith, and ardent love, which are now his boast and joy. When all has been detailed to us, we feel in a better capacity for judging of the course we ourselves *ought* to pursue. If we are strangers to their happiness ; if we know nought of their experience ; if their expressions of trust, of hope, of love, are unintelligible to us, should it not awaken the inquiry as to what is *our foundation of happiness?*—"Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, namely, JESUS CHRIST!" He is the *open door* to the Father's *heart of love* ; and all those who enter by him, (and those only,) may join in the triumphant and seraphic song as given by the Prophet, "Behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust and not be afraid : for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song : he also is become my salvation."* "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God : for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."† *This* we shall find is pre-eminently the language of

* Isa. xii. 2.

† Ibid. lxi. 10.

Matilda,—and that too in the midst of poverty and great bodily affliction ; hence we may be sure that *her* religion is a consistent *reality*. “I feel,” she says, “myself becoming weaker ; the convulsions rather increase than otherwise, but my soul is *calm, peaceful, happy,—nay even joyful* in the Lord ! Oh the privilege of living by faith ! my favourite promise is ever new, ‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.’”* Who for such calm repose, would not cheerfully relinquish their ease, their health, year and the dearest joys of life ? Harsh is the earthly lot of this favoured child of God, but, oh ! the immortal spirit is all joy and on the wing for dismissal from the tottering tabernacle. For years she has been racked with disease and her physical strength prostrated ; surely, then, nothing less than superhuman energy could keep the mind erect and enable it, like the stately eagle, to tower on high, and hold such intimate communion with the God of the universe ! Can we *pity* such a character ? Oh, assuredly *not* ! her lot is truly enviable ; at the same time, the stream of Christian liberality should *not*

* Isa. xxvi. 3.

run so low as to allow such an one to want those necessities which her deep sufferings call for.

I would now introduce the reader to Matilda's own account of *the way* in which the Lord hath led her, which was written, at my request, in July, 1816. She has headed it with the words Moses enjoined on the Israelites, whose march through the wilderness supplies so striking a type of the Christian's pilgrimage through this world to his heavenly home :

“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee,” Deut. viii. 3.

“Dear and honoured Madam,—

“In compliance with your request I send you a few particulars of my birth and life.

I was born at ———, in Kent, on the 22nd day of April, 1814, and was the sixth of ten children ; all of whom, like myself, were born at the National School-house at ———, which school my parents conducted. The days of my infancy and childhood passed away without the occurrence of anything of sufficient importance to demand notice in a relation which must necessarily be very brief—unless I should stop to mention, that, when *very*

young, I remember being much pleased with all kinds of poetry, which I eagerly sought after, and had myself a predilection for making verses.

“Towards the close of the year 1820, my eldest brother, who was also the eldest of the family, came home. He had been kindly educated by the clergyman of the parish; possessing superior abilities, and having advantages far beyond what the limited resources of my parents could have afforded him; he was very clever. For nearly three years he had been a tutor in a school at Newbury; but was now, in consequence of a severe cold, compelled to resign his situation and to return home. His disease proved to be consumption; and this was one of the means which the all-wise God used to bring about his conversion. The change in his mind was gradual, but decided. He examined and re-examined, minutely and prayerfully, every point; and when at length the truth commended itself to his conscience, he yielded to its influence, and became a new creature in Christ Jesus.

“I think it was in 1829 that this change in my brother ‘began to make no small stir’ in our village; nor was I indifferent to it. I saw there was a change, nor could I deny that it was for the better:

but still I saw not the necessity of it. Strange as it may appear, I had never until then had the least idea of salvation by faith in the atonement of Christ. A naturally inquiring mind led me to search the Scriptures daily, to see 'whether these things were so;' but I needed some one to guide me. My dear parents wept and mourned at my brother's perseverance; his former friends forsook him, or looked upon him with cold pity; but 'none of these things moved him:' his heart was fixed, trusting in God.

"For a short time my brother's health improved, and he fully laid himself out for usefulness; but, alas! he only lived long enough to prove that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. His prayers, however, were not in vain; many blessings have, I doubt not, been ours in consequence of his fervent supplication, since his language has been all praise. On the sabbath day, November 28, 1839, he assisted in the worship of God on earth, and on the 30th he united in the eternal worship of heaven. One minute, in accents scarcely articulate, he was heard faintly whispering,

• Distress with pain, disease, and grief,
 This feeble body see;
 Grant patience, rest, and kind relief,
 Hear and remember me!'

and the next minute his happy soul, released from the shackles of mortality, had joined in the glad anthem above—‘THOU wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood!’

“I have dwelt thus long upon my brother, because his history appears so intimately interwoven with my own. It would be too tedious to narrate all the exercises of my mind which followed my brother’s conversion and death: whatever they were, though unalleviated by human sympathy, they were not unnoticed by Him to whom all desires are known. I was sixteen when my brother died; but having never been beyond the limits of my own village, and having always suffered much from delicacy of health, which was now increasing upon me, I was in a measure ignorant of everything out of my own contracted sphere. I had no education beyond what I received with the children of the school, except that, for a few months, my brother had given me lessons in English grammar, and in the French language. I clearly perceived, however, now, that my brother’s religion was that which I must possess, if I would be either safe or happy—and I began to pray. But, alas! I FELT NOT, though I *saw* my own utter nothingness. When I look back to these years, I think,

surely, surely, never was any one so backward to receive the truth. To be brief; six years, nay almost seven, rolled over my head before I yielded to the convictions of my mind. At first I was a Pharisee, trusting to my own works, and acknowledging that I did so because in my ignorance I deemed them a passport to the favour of God; afterwards, I was no less a Pharisee, although professedly trusting in Christ. I had not *living* faith, although I had then as clear conceptions as now of the scheme of salvation.

“In June, 1834, my parents left the National School; the elder members of our family were scattered about here and there, and I opened a day-school under my father's roof. I succeeded tolerably well; and, in 1836, my parents wishing me to be a little more independent, offered me the possession of a small cottage adjoining their own, into which my sister E—— and myself moved, in October, and which we still occupy, and wherein we have spent many happy hours. Here, I have again and again sought and found the Friend of sinners; here I have communed with many fellow-travellers towards the kingdom of heaven; here I have lived happily, and, I trust, not altogether

uselessly ; and here, if it be my Father's will, I hope ere long to die in calm and assured faith.

“As it regards my education, I think I can truly say that the little I do know, I have for the most part acquired since I left my parents' roof ; and I believe my removal hither was an opening of Divine providence to enable me to gain that knowledge after which I panted ; and to prepare me for future usefulness. I had already, occasionally, written poetry, and also short essays or meditations in prose ; but I seldom showed my productions to any one. The first published piece of poetry I wrote was, ‘Jesus wept,’ which was written when I was about fifteen.

“Very soon after we had taken possession of our cottage, my mind was deeply convinced that though I had so long *read* and talked of, and known ~~the way~~ of life, yet that I HAD NEVER TRUD IN IT. My attention therefore now was wholly given to the great subject of religion ; nor did I rest until I had obtained a satisfactory assurance of my acceptance with God through the precious blood of Christ.

“From this time I wrote frequently ; and being in a remarkable manner aided by friends, I published by subscription, in July 1843, a volume of Poems ;

the year following, my ‘Seasons of Peace;’* and last year, through the kindness of friends, whom I shall ever remember with grateful love and esteem, a second edition of ‘Meditative Hours.’† I still continue to write, occasionally, as my strength permits. How long my life may be spared I know not; but this I know—that the same hand which has hitherto guided and directed me, will not now withdraw his aid. Since I began to attend to the things which concern my peace, I have been privileged above many, with the enjoyment of my Father’s love and presence, and the assurance of his acceptance through Jesus my Saviour. Fain would I, dear Madam, recount with more particularity the way in which the Lord my God hath led me these nine years in the wilderness; but my state of health forbids it, even were I not fearful of being troublesome to you. With *deep* self-abasement, I remember my own perverseness and rebellion; and with heartfelt gratitude, I review the acts of long-suffering kindness which my God has shown towards me. When I say that I have *enjoyed* life, that I have been happy in my Saviour’s love, I feel that I am saying but little;

* Darton and Clarke, Holborn Hill.

† Houlston and Stoneman, 65, Paternoster Row.

and truly if aught less than God himself could have satisfied my soul in health, how sad were my condition *now*, when severe bodily affliction prevents me from ranging abroad to seek for pleasure in those beauties of creation on which I have so often feasted. Blessed be God! He is my sure defence, my Rock, my Fortress, my Deliverer. He makes his strength perfect in my weakness; and gives me to *realize* the truth of his own words, 'Thou wilt keep him in PERFECT PEACE whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' Soon, perhaps very soon, I shall lay down this tabernacle; but I shall be clothed *upon* with my house which is from heaven. The future is cloudlessly bright, and while I yet sojourn here and suffer, I am sustained by Him whose sure word of promise is 'I will NEVER leave thee nor forsake thee.' Should this be ~~my~~ last effort, may it tend to the glory of God; and whether I live or die, may he still be glorified.

"I remain, my dear Madam,

"Very gratefully yours,

"MATILDA ———."

Here, dear readers, is a plain unvarnished tale, given with simplicity and sincerity—a tale which

we trust will come home to every heart ; confessedly it forms a most striking contrast to the account given of Frank, and most evident is it from this record that the religion of Matilda is not only *not* a delusion, but that it also consists in something *more* than mere externals. Her soul is athirst for God—for the living God ! He, in fact, is all her salvation and *all her desire*. She has drunk deep of the cup of sorrow, but *deeper still* of the well-spring of salvation ; and were she now asked, “*What path, could you have chosen for yourself, would you wish to have walked in ?*” without doubt she would reply, “*The same path in which my gracious Lord has so tenderly led me ; for it is a right path, and one that will ere long conduct me to that city of secure habitation where my sun shall no more go down ; for God shall be my everlasting light, and the days of my mourning shall be ended ! Here I am sick, and weak, and faint, but there, my Lord has assured me,*

‘Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and fear’d no more.’”

We need not wonder that such a character should begin her heaven upon earth ! “He who *hath* the SON HATH”—not *shall have*—“life, and shall not

come unto condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life, from darkness to light, from misery to happiness, and from corroding fretting care to joy and peace in believing." What can rob such an one of his patience, his security, his hope, his confidence, his future bliss ? Can *tribulation* ? The Christian knows this to be a *part* of his heritage, (John xvi. 33.) Shall distress ?—in this he is taught to glory, (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.) Shall persecution ?—oh no ! This ever acts as a powerful moral lever to raise him above the world ; and moreover his glorified MASTER has left his blessed footmarks in this thorny maze ! Shall famine terrify him ? He inherits the promise, more fixed than the sun in his course : "Thy bread *shall* be given thee, and thy water *shall* be *sure* !" In all these things, and every other conceivable contingency, the child of God is more than conqueror through Him who *loved* him and gave himself for him.

Oh, precious, priceless love ! would that its constraining power was more *felt* and *manifest* among us ! we should not then be so often found looking coldly and suspiciously one on another : on the contrary, we should endeavour *more feelingly* to sympathise with and lessen the burdens of all the members of Christ's mystical body, and thus draw closer the

bond of union. For we may be assured, as an eloquent writer observes, that it is "a distance of spirit from the HEAD which leads to a distance of spirit from the members of the body. As with the beams of the sun, the farther they recede from the centre, the wider are they separated from each other. So it is with 'the children of light.' Every believer is a solar beam—an emanation from the Sun of righteousness; the more *remote* he lives from Christ, the centre of the soul, the wider will he be alienated in affection and in spirit from the members of Christ. . . . But the converse, oh, how precious!—love rekindled in the heart—oh, how will it, in its fondest, holiest power, go forth towards all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. His image will be their passport to our hearts. His name will secure their welcome to our *homes*." Yea, all we have and are, were we rightly impressed with a sense of our obligations, being consecrated to the service of our gracious, loving Lord, would, as a matter of course, be readily made available to the wants of His poor and afflicted members, each one of whom would be diligently sought after and tenderly cared for—not so much as a *duty*, but as a *precious privilege*, to evince our love to Him who,

by placing them within our reach, has virtually *committed them to our care.*

Certainly, if we more fully realised our high and holy vocation, and meditated more on our future glorious destiny, we should need no arguments to induce us to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, to tend the sick and comfort the sorrowful ; for, looking into the charter of all our hopes, we should read with thrilling emotion the anticipated acknowledgment, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the *least* of these MY BRETHREN, YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME." ' .

Christian readers, how do you receive these words ? Do they fall on your ears as any common saying of *man's* pronouncing, or do you list in them the accents of Him who spake as never man spake, and who has declared that he will render unto every man according to his works ; and that a cup of *cold water*, given in *his name*, shall in no wise lose its reward. If as the latter you receive them, you will not regret hearing of another opportunity of *lending to the Lord*. Never should it be said that a *Christian* was weary of giving ; remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, that "it is *more* blessed to *give* than to receive." Whoever *is* weary in this most blessed

work, emphatically tells us that he is weary of *lending to the Lord*—weary in offering the sacrifices in which he is well pleased!—weary of drying the orphan's tears and making the widow's heart to sing for joy!—weary of soothing the couch of suffering and enlivening the cottage of poverty! And should any such *weary, cold-hearted* ones be found among the faithful followers of Him who was rich in all the plenitude of glory, but for our sakes voluntarily became so poor that he could say, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, *but* the Son of man hath *not* where to lay his head"—that we might possess a title "to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." If, then, any are weary, surely there must be *something* wrong *somewhere*. They *cannot* have a firm belief in the promises, nor a realising sense of *personal* interest in them. They *cannot* feel with the poet, that

"The seeds which piety and love
Have scatter'd here below,
In the fair fertile fields above
To ample harvest grow."

They *cannot* carry about with them the solemn lesson inculcated by our Lord in the parable of the talents, Matt. xxv. 14—30. They must, in a

measure at least, lose sight of that *great* day of reckoning which is hastening on with more than rapid strides, when the Lord, having *received his kingdom*, shall return in power and great glory. Ah! *when that day* shall arrive, not one will feel he has traded too diligently; not one will fear he has been *too liberal*!—not one regret that he has cast too many mites into the Lord's treasury! Oh, no! the recompense will be so great, so transcendent—the reward so overpoweringly disproportioned to the fullest service the holiest labourer can render—that each will wonder at his own infatuation in putting out so little of his money to usury, in trading so timidly with the precious talents entrusted to his care.

O that we more frequently and prayerfully looked forward to this solemn day!—not only should we use our *substance* aright, but should live, in every respect, more as awakened and responsible sinners. Instead of a life too much devoted to the interests and enjoyments of time—spent, yea, *wasted*, in the pursuit of earthly desires, which truly constitutes it a *dream*,—we should betake ourselves in earnest to God, the *only good* of intelligent creatures; we should yield up our wills to His, and seek, by

constant persevering prayer, the more complete renewal of our souls in true holiness, and the sanctification of our selfish natures by the transforming efficacy of that Eternal Spirit whose *purifying* influences, as well as all other covenant blessings, were purchased for us by the God Man when he offered himself as our Ransom, Surety, and Atonement.

Deeply and fully has the subject of this sketch experienced this renewing and purifying influence ; and earnestly would I hope that some who may read this narrative may be induced to pursue the same course, and try what VITAL Christianity can effect for them. The reason religion acts so little on the mass of those who profess it, is simply this : *head knowledge* is mistaken for HEART EXPERIENCE, or if not exactly mistaken, is taken for it. An old writer says, that, " If we are only so far Christians as to own and receive the history of the Saviour's birth, person, character, and death, we are as much without Christ, as much left to ourselves, as little helped by Him, as those evil spirits who cried out, ' We know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God ! ' "

Are we then asked, How far the professing world generally may be called *true* Christians ? We would

reply, just so far as they *resemble Christ*; and NONE can resemble him till a principle of heavenly life be imparted to them, and they are brought, like Matilda, to forsake their *self-righteous* as well as their sinful selves, and cast themselves, in all their emptiness and vileness, on *Creator fulness*! And wherever this principle is thus effectually implanted, the individual no longer *rests* in the form of godliness, but, from the lowest depths of a truly contrite heart, exclaims, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts!"—"I beseech thee show me thy glory, and cause all thy *goodness* to pass before me!" Oh, when once the soul is thus prostrate before the mercy-seat, he begins to see *something* of the glory of the incarnate God, and something of his own poverty and vileness; so that he can no longer cherish high thoughts of himself, but gives vent to feelings akin to those which induced the holy men of old to exclaim, "Woe is me!"—"I abhor myself, and repent as in dust and ashes." This is the very temper the SPIRIT loves to see manifested; and in hearts thus influenced he LOVES to dwell, opening to their adoring minds yet deeper and fuller views of the altogether lovely One who is "*full of grace and truth*," and who is

made of God, unto every believing, humbled sinner, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption!" From the moment the Christian can realise this transcendent blessing, he goes on his way *rejoicing*. His treasure he *feels* is in Heaven, far above the reach of losses or misfortune. Disease may waste his *body*, but his spirit is tranquil, yea, joyful, knowing in whom he has believed, and that his afflictions are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed. Few, very few, are called to bear greater bodily sufferings than Matilda; but her song is ever one of triumph. She keeps the enemy *out* by keeping *close* to Jesus; and this is the *only* way in which we can any of us succeed with this ever-vigilant adversary, who besets our daily path, and, in one way or another, is perpetually drawing us from our allegiance to our Heavenly King!

For two years this patient sufferer has been unable to move herself, and oftentimes when moved the agony occasioned by the effort is so great as to oblige her to scream; but no murmur escapes her lips. Until she was *compelled* to desist from sheer inability to move about, she was indefatigable as a sabbath-school teacher, visitor of the sick, and tract-distributor. Her regular attendance on, and high

estimation of the public means of grace, were also strikingly conspicuous. "The falling snow and beating rain were never," says an eye-witness, "allowed to prevent her from keeping her appointment with her scholars, or filling up her seat in the house of God." And this constancy, my readers must remember, was evinced by one who *from the time she had known and loved the truth had never known a day's health or ease!* Oh! if there were more of her zeal, we should not see so many classes unattended at our sabbath-schools, or so many seats unoccupied in our sanctuaries.

I will now proceed to give my readers a few extracts from Matilda's letters, addressed to me, since August, 1846, which may prove to the *many*, as they have to the *few* who have already seen them, *means of grace*, as well as show the prevailing state of her mind, which truly tends *upwards* :

Nov. 23.—“ * * * * * What can I say to testify my deep and heartfelt gratitude *

* I have *purposely* selected from those letters in which Matilda expresses her gratitude for the assistance the kind readers of the Christian Lady's and the Englishwoman's Magazines have enabled me to afford her, as this volume may fall into the hands of some of them.

for the timely aid just received. My faith in my heavenly Father's care, both of my body and soul, constantly waxes stronger and stronger. I possess such a clear, firm, and unshaken confidence in Him, that I am never surprised, although astonished, at the manner in which my God supplies *all* my need. A friend suggested to me the other day, that probably one design of God in so unexpectedly prolonging my life, was to give his own children an opportunity of glorifying him, by ministering to my temporal necessities. And truly I often think so: may all and each fully experience that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive;' then they will be blessed indeed! I must leave you, dear Madam, to thank the unknown donor: this is a fresh errand to the throne. Blessed be God," &c.

" * * * * * Your note and accompaniment were duly received to-day, and with much and deep gratitude. I scarcely know, dear Madam, whether I am in reality worse; my cough is decidedly worse, and I feel the effects of it more sensibly. The weather, also, has been very trying. You kindly wish to know if I have lacked anything; and truly, 'No good thing, is faith's most decisive reply.' We have been oft perplexed, dearest Madam, but

net in despair ; our faith has been tried, sometimes most severely tried, but not overcome. Our God is indeed a covenant-keeping God ! Hallelujah ! At times, my dear sister has been reduced to the last penny, and, as she never troubles me about temporals, I know it not until she says, ‘ Matilda, dear, I have no more money ; you must go to our *Banker* again ; and, my dear Madam, *just* when our heavenly Father sees we need assistance, it comes in some shape or another. To-day you have been again the kind almoner, and, in the name of our Master, we unitedly thank you and the kind friends whose bounty is so welcome.

“ My state of extreme weakness still renders it necessary that I have such things as my squeamish appetite can fancy, and these, though few, are expensive. I feel that I am indeed highly favoured : I have all I need, and receive all, as it were, *express from God !* Oh, what a worm am I ! and how does a sense of my Father’s unmerited love sink me in the dust ! On Thursday, dear Madam, I had a visit from Dr. ——— ; he says that the state of perfect quietness, both of mind and body, in which I have been kept, has contributed to the prolongation of my life, and that, although my lungs are really almost

gone, yet, if decay continues to progress as gradually as hitherto, I may yet linger some months; nevertheless, an attack of coughing or convulsions *may* suddenly snap the brittle thread of life. I am *still* in my Father's hands, dear Madam, and would not thwart his purposes: only let Him be glorified, and his worm will rejoice. I must congratulate you, dear Madam, on possessing a calm peace of mind: oh, may you ever be enabled to cling to the bleeding cross—to stay your mind on God, and be kept by him in *perfect peace!* Amen," &c.

The next is not strictly from the packet I put aside to extract from; but having accidentally opened it, I find it breathing such truly spiritual advice, that I am induced to transcribe it, feeling assured *many* are in the same state I was in when penning the note to Matilda to which this is a reply:

"I was very much pleased, my ever dear and honoured Madam, to recognise your handwriting, and humbled to the very dust in gratitude to my heavenly Father for his, may I not say, *superabundant* goodness. Oh my dear, kind Madam! how, how can I tell you by words the deep, fervent affection of my heart towards you and yours, or how repay you for your many acts of kindness?

Ah ! *I cannot repay you, but I will pray with added earnestness that our Father would shine brightly into your soul, and give you sweetly to realise his every precious promise as your own.* I am deeply concerned, dearest Madam, that you are yet mourning in spiritual darkness—and the painful thought will recur, perhaps *My prayers for you have lacked energy, fervour, faith.* I know, by blest experience, that God expects not bodily energy when he withholds bodily strength ; yet the *feeblest* child of God may *lie still*, and simply, yet firmly and determinately, look to Jesus. I will go again and again, dear Madam ; and oh, may your soul be opened to receive all the Father waits to give.

“I am afraid you will think I can have little sympathy with you in your spiritual deadness—’tis true, ever since I knew God as my reconciled Father, which is now ten years, my motto has been, ‘Always rejoicing ;’ and though I have passed through many and *deep waters*, I have still been enabled to rejoice in God ! Often it has been a *struggle*, a conflict, yea, a *desperate conflict* ; but I have *obstinately believed*—not in my own goodness, but in my invincible Captain ; and through Him I have overcome !

“Dear, dear Madam, *why* may not you ! With

all deference I would suggest, Does not your deadness of soul arise from looking to yourself rather than to Jesus. I cannot conceive of a child of God living by faith and not enjoying *light*. Joy may be, and often is withheld, for many reasons, (I mean rapturous joy ;) but our knowledge of the changeless character of Jehovah ought always to inspire confidence : and unshaken confidence must, I should think, produce peace—even *perfect peace* ! This confidence is sweetly defined by ‘a recumbency on Jesus !’ A full and thorough reliance on him *in* all, *for* all, and *through* all ! I have frequently, when under the influence of temptation, only been enabled to overcome by a bold claim, so to speak, of the *blood-bought* promise : I plead that *I am His* ; consequently, I have an inheritance in the promises ; for Jesus’ blood hath purchased them for *me* ! And, dearest Madam, I can unshrinkingly lay my heart open before God. *Only*, however, while I have a firm hold of the blood of sprinkling, I become so emboldened, yet so sweetly melted, that my feelings are best expressed by the words of the poet :

‘The speechless awe that dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love.’

“I have been rather worse the last few days, and am unusually faint to-day; yet, dear Madam, I felt so anxious to be the means of conveying to you some spiritual blessing, that I was unwilling my sister should acknowledge your kind note and accompaniment; and now I shall look anxiously for a letter assuring me that I have not been too bold, or taken too much upon me. I leave you with God, dear Madam, and may his Spirit quicken us all. Believe that you shall have a warmer interest in the prayers of

“Yours, gratefully and affectionately,

“MATILDA.”

I will not gratuitously offer violence to the feelings of any of my readers by supposing an apology necessary in giving this note in its entire form; for I am sure, no *Christian* can read it without earnestly desiring to catch something of its spirit; and, moreover, it must convince them, far better than any remarks of my own, that the writer is what I have endeavoured to represent her—a true child of God, richly baptized with the Holy Spirit, and prostrate in her own vileness and nothingness before the cross of Christ, whence she draws, in

large measure, patience, faith, hope, zeal,—yea, and every other grace the Incarnate God can give.

Happy, thrice happy posture! and blessed, thrice blessed believer, who can constantly retain it! Temptation may assail, sorrows may wound, trials may oppress,—but, *while prostrate*, he is low enough for all the fury of the storm to *pass over* him without inflicting on him lasting injury :

“Wait, then, MY soul, submissive wait,

Prostrate before the mercy-seat,”

till, like Matilda, thou canst sing, in deepest woe, thy loud hallelujahs of praise and thankfulness !

We now return to the letters which have stricter reference to her own individual state and corresponding trust in her covenant God :

“With much pleasure I embrace the present opportunity of informing you of my temporal and spiritual welfare, about which you are so kindly solicitous.

“With regard to temporals, dear Madam, my heavenly Father continues tenderly mindful of his child. The approach of cold weather already adds to our expenses, as an extra fire is needed. Last winter, until towards the close, my sisters frequently took their meals in my room ; but for a long time

past I have been quite unable to bear this. The company of a Christian friend, sitting quietly by me for conversation, reading, and prayer, is refreshing ; but I feel more and more a distaste for aught that is not of the heavens, heavenly. But believe me, my dear Madam, increase of expenditure does not alarm me ; my faith is tried, but, blessed be God, it does not fail. And is not the trial of faith more precious than gold ? Ay, yes ! my sure trust is in God—and he that trusteth in him shall never be confounded. Why, then—hallelujah !

“ It *might* be more agreeable to flesh and blood to know beforehand, how and when every want is to be supplied ; but where then would be the test of faith ? and where the simple, unwavering confidence of a child ? Oh, my dear Madam ! believe me when I assure you that I have not the least apprehension of real need being unsupplied while God my Father lives—for He has engaged, by covenant promise, to supply all my need out of his fulness in Christ Jesus. ‘ Give me this day my daily bread,’ is a prayer that he will not disregard while I am his and he is mine. The silver and the gold are also his ; and, through the *blood*, the *precious blood* of the covenant, I may with humble boldness ask what I

will, and ‘it shall be done unto me!’ Many thanks, dearest Madam, for your truly kind exertions on my behalf. Happy indeed should I be, to be permitted personally to thank you: methinks in eternity we shall talk of these wonders of Providence and Grace! My attacks grow worse; my cough is fearfully violent; this morning I have sadly sprained my neck with coughing and retching—so that I am now smarting with pain. But oh, my dear Madam! *never, never* for a moment does my Father leave his child. So sweetly do I feel conscious of his *kind* and continued presence even in suffering—yea, often *then* most particularly: ‘Who is a God like unto our God?’ I am increasingly encouraged to spend all my little strength for Him in speaking of my Father’s grace. Oh, his *boundless* LOVE!

* * * * *

“I was deeply interested in ———; truly, yes, dear Madam, she *has* a warm interest in my prayers.

“ * * * I feel much and deeply interested in the Jews myself, and will especially remember you next Wednesday; and may your own soul, my beloved Madam, be richly and abundantly watered! Oh! *plunge* DEEPLY into the fountain of Jesus’ blood, and you shall realise its cleansing and

vivifying power! God bless you! And now, dear Madam, with kind and respectful affection, and fervent prayers for you and your beloved children, in which my sisters join,

“I remain,” &c.

“Many thanks for your kind note and welcome enclosure—which arrived, as did the last, *just* when it was needed. God be praised!

“What a mournful narration was yours, dear Madam! Yes, indeed, I will pray for the dear bereaved ones. Oh, what an unspeakable consolation is an interest in Christ!—especially in time of trouble. May you, and all the surviving friends, richly experience it! It seems particularly affecting that she should not have seen her dear husband and children before her departure. Oh, my dear Madam! would not such repatriation be intolerable if it were not for the prospect of a reunion? Blessed be God, we *shall* meet again, and never, never part!—yes, meet to reign with our Jesus, and dwell with him for ever!

“I continue to suffer much, dear Madam, but am sweetly kept from impatience; yea, although I feel my heart bound with joy at the thought of *Home*,

yet so delightfully does my Father sweeten my bitters, that I am enabled still to rejoice in pain, and to be exceedingly joyful in all my tribulation. It is no small alleviation of my pain that he deigns to make me useful. . . . Oh, what an amazing condescension! Pray, dear Madam, that in *all* things I may glorify God. May you be assisted in your efforts to do good, and, in watering others, be abundantly watered yourself, prays

“Yours, &c., &c.,

“MATILDA.”

“ * * * You will, I am sure, excuse me for not replying immediately to your kind note and acknowledging the enclosure. I cannot conjecture who the kind donor be, unless she be a friend of Lady ———’s family. They once lived in ———, and part of them are now living in Warwickshire. But, however, I have nought to do with *that*. Our heavenly Father is never at a loss for means to accomplish his purposes; truly, he is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind! Thank you, dear Madam, for your concern for me; I have suffered most intensely of late with my side and back: the pain of it is so agonising that I cannot forbear

screaming—painful as I know it must be to my kind affectionate sisters, and mother to hear me. Sometimes I am comparatively easy for a while ; but moving always brings on a paroxysm of pain, and of course a fit of coughing is more distressing than formerly. Indeed, dearest Madam, I cannot (and would not if I could) fully explain my sufferings. But you will not think, I hope, that any recital sounds like *complaint*. I dread *appearing* impatient, and dread more *being* so. My kind Father does comfort and aid me in various ways, and your little note brought its quota of consolation. Yes, I still hang upon His word, and I oft breathe the prayer, ‘O my Father, *if it be* possible, let this cup pass from me!’ but I am still enabled to add. ‘*Not my will, but thine be done.*’ I would rather, *much rather*, endure *keener* anguish, if thus only the work of refining may be accomplished :

‘Let me but hear my Saviour say,
 ‘Strength shall be equal to my day ;
 Then I rejoice in deep distress,
 Leaning on *all-sufficient* grace !’

“ I am grieved to hear so indifferent an account of *your* health, dear Madam, and do fervently pray that the rod may be sanctified, and when our Father

pleases, removed. God bless you, and make his consolations abound towards you! Amen.

* * * *

“Yours,” &c.

* * * *

“Words are but feeble to express my deep gratitude for the fresh proof of your considerate kindness received to-day. I feel that, I should indeed be a monster of ingratitude were I for a moment to doubt my Father’s ability and willingness to supply all my need, urgent though it be. And my dear Madam, the sweet assurance that I shall be permitted to want any good thing, tends very materially to keep my mind in perfect peace, even when racked with bodily anguish. Oh! what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? My sufferings the last fortnight have been great; my back and side are in constant, oftentimes violent, pain, and I suffer much in consequence from faintness; but ‘I am the Lord’s, and he is mine!’ I am oft perplexed and tried, but not in despair—no, for He in whom I trust is an immutable God!

“God bless you, and fill you with himself, and give you fully to realise Matt. xxi. 40, is the constant prayer of yours,” &c., &c.

* * * * *

“Most gratefully do I acknowledge the receipt of yours this morning, and the enclosure. My heavenly Father has permitted my faith to be much tried the last few weeks ; but it is *all* kindness, *all* love. He has not suffered me to dishonour him by unbelief. Oh, how graciously does he remember his promises ! I am often led to wonder why my Father keeps me *so long* in the furnace, and makes me so fully and entirely dependent on himself for the supply of my temporal necessities ; but I am thankful that my confidence is *firm* and unshaken ! God is a faithful God ! I *know* in whom I have believed. The Lord *has* provided—the Lord *will* provide ! I still suffer most intensely with my side, back, and head ; the continued pain causes much faintness and debility. But, my dear Madam, my mind is sweetly free from care and anxiety ; my soul is calmly fixed on Jesus, and my own sweet promise is yet fulfilled. (Isa. xlv. 3.)

* * * * *

“Gratefully yours,” &c. .

* * * * *

I have to plead guilty to the charge of neglect, in not having ere now acknowledged your last kind note and the kind

present enclosed. May our God richly reward all kind friends with his best and choicest favours!

“I received yours on sabbath morning, and did not forget to name you at my Father’s throne. I trust, dear Madam, you met Jesus at his table. On the 5th, I was favoured with the precious opportunity of receiving from the hands of a dear servant of God the sacred emblems of my Saviour’s death; and afresh I was sealed his by blood Divine!

“This cold, damp weather, dear Madam, greatly tries me. I suffer much; my daily attacks are more violent: my sensations are dreadful. The mere anticipation of them *apart from Jesus* would be more than I could bear; but Jesus is sweetly precious! I wait not, dear Madam, until the storm is past, and *then* acknowledge ‘He hath done all things well;’ but *now*, in the midst of all, I heartily exclaim, ‘He doeth all things well!’

“I am glad you begin to feel comfortable. Depend upon it, dear Madam, *whatever* blessing, temporal or spiritual, our Father can give, or you have faith to receive, shall be constantly asked for by

“Yours,” &c.

“ * * * * * My heavenly Father has

richly blessed me of late. My greatly-increased sufferings are sweetened by an ‘abundance of peace,’ and my soul is indeed filled with God. I feel conscious that I shall *soon* be at *home* !

“I have with much pleasure composed the accompanying lines* for you, dear Madam. You will praise God when I tell you my times for composing, lately, have been just when recovering from my dreadful attacks of convulsions: so sweetly is my soul kept in ‘perfect peace.’ *God bless you and yours*, dear Madam, and reward you for your kindness to me. We shall know each other fully in heaven.

“Believe me,” &c.

“ * * * For myself it is an unspeakable pleasure to write of the goodness of my covenant God, and to few do I delight to write more than to *yourself*; but, alas! my poor clay tenement grows weaker and weaker; and often days pass away, and I dare not attempt writing. I feel that my strength is sensibly diminishing, and that I am daily less able to bear up against my many infirmities of body. But not to enlarge, (as I feel already growing faint,) I

* Since this note was written, Matilda has published a little poem, entitled “*Missionary Toils*.”

yet live as on the verge of eternity. **JESUS!** his blood and righteousness are *all* my *hope* and *plea*! Tempted sometimes by Satan and the flesh to something like impatience, yet *the* Cross can put each foe to flight, and I triumph still! *Waiting*—that sweetly expresses my feelings—*Waiting* until my *change* come!—*Oh what* a change!

“I trust, my very dear **Madam**, you are rejoicing in ‘nearness of access’ to the throne of grace, and having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, are asking and receiving of **all** his fulness. Oh, may you be richly baptized from above! My prayers are still *yours*, and I believe my Father *hears* and *answers*. * * * *

• “Yours,” &c.

I do not quite like that my dear sisters should send to Rugby without writing a few lines myself also, but they *must* necessarily be *few*. Many, many thanks, dearest **Madam**, for your timely aid. Oh may your own panting, longing soul be enriched from our Father’s spiritual treasury! I do really sympathize with you; but, oh! believe me, my dear **Madam**, the richest effusions of the Holy Ghost *may* be yours; they are *purchased* for you;

they are *offered* to you ; you have only to ask, and you shall receive. You complain of coldness and want of energy in prayer, &c., and truly such feelings are most painful and distressing. Perhaps you may think I am a stranger to *such* feelings *experimentally* ; but indeed I am not, nor does Satan fail to harass me at such times with the suggestion that I cannot be one of God's children ; but I have learned that I must leave ALL THAT at the foot of the Cross ! Jesus cares for me, and

‘ ‘Tis enough that He will care ;
 “ Why should I the burden bear ?’

Oh come, I beseech you, and embrace the *comfort* as well as the salvation of the Gospel, rise above all these painful and harassing sensations, and let the sense of your own deficiency lead you to cling more determinately to the bleeding cross ! Oh ! dear Madam, trust fully in Him *who saves to the uttermost*. Your remark of Issachar was striking, but *not* applicable to *you* : *you are* on the Lord's side. Oh strike a note of *praise* on your too silent harp. and exclaim, *I am thine !* God bless you, dear, dear Madam ! Amen. * * I will only add. that my poor frame still has to endure anguish. and

I have had to fight more than formerly with my spiritual adversary ; but through Jesus *he* is foiled, and I am conqueror. Hallelujah ! * *

* Believe me, you have an unceasingly warm interest in the prayers and affection of

“ Yours most truly and thankfully.”

Forgive me for sending you such a shabby scrawl in reply to your note, and in acknowledgment of your kind remittance. Indeed I feel almost unfit for writing. I have been compelled to write rather beyond my strength since my books* came in, and now I feel more unable than formerly. I am still much the same, dear Madam, my back and side are always painful, and the medical man tells me he is obliged to confess that he can really think of nothing to relieve me. He dares not try a blister, because I could not bear it. Oh, my dear Madam, I find it oft a sore conflict to possess my soul in patience ; but I am thankful that I have so unwavering a trust in my Father's faithfulness to his word. My spirit pants for home ! I long to be unclothed, or rather clothed upon ; and often think that if the choice were mine, I should like to go to

my Father, that I may be one of those who shall come *with* Him when he shall come in his glory, and have part in the first resurrection : but His will be done. Oh that that day may speedily arrive ; even so come Lord Jesus !

* *
* * *

“ Yours,” &c.

These extracts, if read in contrast with the first part of this volume, will abundantly suffice to show *how* striking is the difference between a child of God and a votary of the world. And, oh, how *fully* do they prove to us the elevating tendency of our holy religion ! Truly it “raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar out of the dunghill.”

Faith, in its living, active state, is doubtless the universal panacea for our lapsed nature ; for not only does it *show* us the tree of life, but enables us to stretch forth our hands and pluck its ambrosial sweets ! Oh, happy the possessor of this wonder-working grace ! it makes the poor doubly rich—rich in possession, and rich in reversion : it makes the rich poor in spirit, and the proud yielding and humble ! But then this faith, like the precious metals, has its counterfeits. Many pass a life unblameable and just towards their fellow-creatures.

and are outwardly exact in the discharge of their duty towards God ; and, moreover, will tell us they *have faith* : and so, in truth, they have, but *not* that faith that works by *love*, and sanctifies the heart : but such as Matilda possessed before she left her father's roof, and to which she refers so feelingly in her Narrative, in these words :—" My mind was deeply convinced that though I had so long read and talked of, and *known*, the way of life, yet that I HAD NEVER TROD IN IT." This is a solemn confession, and one that could never be made by an individual who had not thoroughly *probed* the heart. A superficial acquaintance with the *hidden* workings — a hasty survey of the chambers of imagery* — would never conduct to such a conclusion ! The tendency of the human heart is *self-satisfaction* ; and whenever the contrary feeling is excited, we may be sure the *leaven* has been *hid*, and is beginning to operate, which is destined ere long to leaven the whole lump, and make it a temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. As the apostle tells us, ' Casting down imagination, and every high thing that would exalt itself above the will and word of Him who is emphatically ' THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.' "

But we find, that no sooner had Matilda discovered, by searching her heart in the light of God's word, that she was *not* possessed of the faith of God's elect, than she at once resolved, with David, to "give neither sleep to her eyes nor slumber to her eyelids" until she "had obtained a satisfactory assurance of her acceptance with God." Her own righteousness was at once rejected, and she resolved, in the strength of Jehovah, to trust in *nothing* but the meritorious *doing* and *dying* of the Lord Jesus Christ! She now felt the *full* force of those lines of the venerable Toplady!

"Nothing in my hands I bring.

Simply to thy cross I cling;

Helpless, look to thee for grace;

Guilty, plead *thy* righteousness:

Vile I to the Fountain fly,

Wash me, Saviour, or I die!

and from *that* hour was enabled to exclaim, "My Lord, and my God!" How different this from the mere nominal Christian, who gives but a cold assent to the truths of the Gospel, and depends on *Christ's* merits *only* when he feels his own stock at a low ebb! And shall we be accused of exceeding the limits of *Christian* charity, if we assert that

there are thousands and tens of thousands who thus act!—"A deceived heart hath turned them aside, that they cannot deliver their souls, and say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"* How fearful is such a state, for in a moment the deceived and utterly *defenceless* soul may be driven from its clay tabernacle, and ushered into the world of spirits, to await the awful doom of those who have *wasted* their day of grace and opportunity, rejected the offers of salvation, and made light of the Gospel feast! For God the holy and the high, will know no difference in *that* day between the openly profane and those who presume to mix up their own fancied merits with the all-perfect and complete righteousness of his beloved Son! This may appear harsh and uncharitable doctrine to those who have all their life long been endeavouring to *buy* salvation with their own virtues; but we dare avow that it is **THE TRUTH OF GOD**, written on the page of inspiration with the clearness of a sunbeam!

There is *no such thing as human merit!* How can criminals under sentence of death *merit* their *own* discharge? And such are every one of us until the chains have been knocked off by Him who is *the*

appointed One, in the counsels of Eternity, to “say to the prisoners, Go forth ; to them that are in darkness, show yourselves.”*

Our most sacred duties are as ineffectual in procuring us acceptance with God, as any common act of kindness towards our fellow-creatures. We may fast not only “twice in the week,” but *every* day ; we may pray, yea, for a show, “make long prayers.” We may build hospitals, endow churches, or whatever else a sanctimonious pride may prompt us to ; but if it is offered as a *passport* to the presence of the King of kings, who ‘nas over and over again told us he only *delights* in “a broken heart and a contrite spirit,” we shall be met by the awful words : “Who hath required *this* at your hands ?” “*I know you not !*” “Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels !”

Nothing will be found in *either* of the characters brought before the reader in this little book to foster self-righteousness or sanction self-dependence. Poor Frank never for one moment thought of depending on his own merits, for he justly felt he had *none*, and yet none ever more faithfully discharged their duty towards their fellow-creatures ; but this was *never*

* Isa. xlix. 3.

once referred to, when his eyes were opened to see his danger. Sober, honest, and temperate, he might have exclaimed to the accusations of conscience, "What lack I yet!" but no! he opened not his mouth but in self-condemnation: "God be merciful to me a SINNER!" was the language of his inmost soul; and therefore I feel there is much more *hope* concerning him than in the death of those whose consciences are lulled into a false security, and who depart saying, "*Peace, peace!*" when God hath not spoken peace.

The privileged rites of the *Christian* cannot open the kingdom of heaven to the hypocrite. An unfaithful under-shepherd may have been summoned to the dying bed, and in very ignorance of the *only* way of salvation, like the false prophets of old, may have daubed with untempered mortar,* or have healed the wound of conscience slightly, by representing the sacraments, which are only a sign of discipleship, and a *commemorative* service of a dying Saviour's love, as *the way* of acceptance with God—the appointed means of return to an offended and forsaken Father. Alas! that there should be any danger of such "*false doctrine*" being proclaimed to a depart-

* Ezekiel xiii. 10—17.

ing soul! Alas! that ministers of our own branch of the true Church should act so contrary to all her truly scriptural Articles, and her simple yet exquisitely beautiful Liturgy, as to bring anything before a dying sinner as a ground of hope save the finished work and spotless righteousness of Jesus! He is the *only* Saviour; He is a *mighty* Saviour; and, blessed be God, He is an *all-sufficient* Saviour--able to save to the very uttermost all that come unto God by Him. "*I, even I, am He, and beside me there is NO SAVIOUR!*" "*Come unto me, and I will give you rest.*" "*Believe on me, and ye shall be saved!*"

Poor sinner!—what canst thou want more than thy gracious Lord has provided for thee in these loving words? Reject every other hope, and go in: all thy helplessness to Him, and thou *shalt* have *peace*, even that peace that passeth all understanding, and which will be realized in all its fulness when mortality shall be swallowed up of life!

May the God of all grace guide both reader and writer to the enjoyment of this blessed soul-sustaining peace, and then *welcome* the darkest hour, the deepest woe!

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